SATURDAY
April 1, 2023

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INDORE TRAGEDY

Toll in temple stepwell roof collapse rises to 36

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HOME-BOUND

U.S. museum to return 15 artefacts

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GILL ON SONG

Gujarat Titans begins title defence in style

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Govt. vows swifter nod for exporters

New foreign trade policy aims at tripling goods and services exports by 2030; apart from a one-time amnesty, no major schemes announced

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Union Commerce, Industry and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday unveiled a new foreign trade policy that moves away from providing incentives to exporters, but lowers a few costs for smaller firms and promises swifter clearances, along with a one-time amnesty scheme for export obligation defaults.

Replacing the extant policy that had been in place since 2015, the new policy kicks in from 2023-24 and aims to almost triple India's goods and services exports to $2 trillion by 2030, from an estimated $760 billion in 2022-23.

India's exports were $435 billion in 2015-16 when the previous policy was introduced and have grown nearly 75% to an estimated $760 billion in 2022-23, Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said.

The new policy will have no sunset date and will be tweaked based on the emerging world trade scenario and industry feedback. While the policy will be open-ended, the schemes sanctioned under it will be time bound.

There are no major new schemes, barring a one-time amnesty under the existing Advance Authorisation and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) schemes, that allow imports of capital goods subject to specified export obligations.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Policy overhauled

Key highlights from India's updated Foreign Trade Policy:

- It focuses on lowering costs for smaller firms and offering swifter clearances
- It aims at tripling exports to $2 trillion by 2030 from $760 billion in 2022-23
- Policy allows for adjustments based on world trade and industry feedback
- Export promotion initiatives include encouraging international trade settlement in Indian currency

Indicted by grand jury, Trump likely to surrender next week

Associated Press
NEW YORK

Former U.S. President Donald Trump has been indicted by a Manhattan grand jury, a historic reckoning after years of investigations into his personal, political and business dealings and an abrupt jolt to his bid to retake the White House.

The exact nature of the charges was unclear on Friday because the indictment remained under seal, but they stem from payments made during the 2016 presidential campaign to silence claims of an extramarital sexual encounter.

Prosecutors said they were working to coordinate Mr. Trump's surrender, which could happen early next week. They did not say if they intended to seek prison time in the event of a conviction, a development that wouldn't prevent the Republican leader from seeking and assuming presidency.

Donald Trump

Mr. Trump, who has denied any wrongdoing and has repeatedly assailed the investigation, called the indictment "political persecution" and predicted it would damage Democrats in 2024. Defence lawyers Susan Necheles and Joseph Tacopina said Mr. Trump "did not commit any crime. We will vigorously fight this political prosecution in court".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Girl gang-raped in moving car; four held

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 19-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped in a moving car in the intervening night between March 25 and 26 in a chilling reminder of the 2012 gang rape case of New Delhi. Four youths, all in the 22 to 24 age group, were arrested within eight hours of the crime being reported.

"Medical examination of the rape survivor has been carried out and she is recovering," said C.K. Baba, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South east). According to the police, on the night of March 25 around 9.30 p.m., the girl, who works as an office assistant in a software firm, was reportedly sitting with a male friend in a park near the National Games Village, Koramangala.

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GETTY IMAGES

Harmanpreet's 171 changed Australia as a team and shaped how we wanted to play: Healy

The wicketkeeper-bat offers an insight into how an already dominant side took its game to the next level after being knocked out of a World Cup by one of cricket's greatest innings. She also talks about the WPL, her Aussie teammates and the other cricketers in her family

> Everybody wants to beat Australia, which we understand. We are sort of hunted at the top

INTERVIEW

Alyssa Healy

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Alyssa Healy greets you with a bright smile on a pleasant Thursday morning at Trident Hotel on Mumbai's Marine Drive. The hotel is about a 10-minute walk from Brabourne Stadium, where a fortnight earlier she played a stunning knock.

Chasing Royal Challengers Bangalore's modest 138 in the Women's Premier League, she cracked an unbeaten 96 off 47 balls to lead UP Warriorz to a 10-wicket victory. That was only the latest of her big, brutally aggressive innings.

Healy is marvellously destructive and, to add to the bowlers' woes, she bats deep. In last year's World Cup final against England at Christchurch, the Australian wicketkeeper-opener played one of the great ODI innings, smashing 170 off 138 balls.

During an exclusive interview with *The Hindu*, the smiling assassin spoke about being part of an all-conquering Australian team, captaining a franchise in the WPL's maiden season, the rivalry with India, growing up with the great Ellyse Perry and how a knock by Harmanpreet Kaur forced a change in Australia's approach to ODI cricket and even impacted her own career. Excerpts:

What has the experience of the WPL been like?

It has been a great learning experience for me. We have got a coach that is English [Jon Lewis], the captain who is an Australian and we are playing in an Indian league; to have been able to pull them together is great.

Has the WPL lived up to your expectations?

> No matter what we tried that day and no matter what we bowled, [Harmanpreet] just found a way to hit it to the boundary

Yes, it has. I thought it would be frenetic, exciting and somewhat chaotic at times. It has lived up to all the hype. I think the support for the WPL has been the best part. The viewership has been great. And every team has got sponsors all over their shirts.

Your husband Mitchell Starc was also in India, with the Australian men's team. And he had a good ODI series, taking eight wickets.

He really did well and the boys did a great job. He loves that white new ball. It looks like he is in good nick and is bowling fast. It's obviously hard to beat India in their home conditions, especially in a World Cup year.

Harmanpreet Kaur's 171 not out (115b) in the 2017 World Cup semifinal changed women's cricket in India forever. How do you look back at that knock and Australia's loss?

That changed the Australian group as a team and reshaped the way we wanted to play ODI cricket, and we have had a fair bit of success, which has been amazing. No matter what we tried that day and no matter what we bowled, she just found a way to hit it to the boundary. I remember us thinking we needed to come up with some different stuff. Everything that we threw at her wasn't good enough. That was a remarkable innings from her and it will stand out for a long time. It was a real turning point for the group and me personally as well.

After that World Cup, there was a dramatic change in your career. You were promoted to open on a permanent basis.

Before that, I was batting in the middle and probably didn't know what my role was. So from that moment on, we reinvented how we wanted to play One-Day cricket and that included me at the top of the order; I had never really got to grab the opportunity when it came to me earlier. At that time, being 27 and where I was in my career, it gave me the confidence to do better. And I am blessed I have always got excellent opening partners, like Rachael Haynes and Beth Mooney.

How does it feel being part of one of the greatest cricket teams – male or female – of all time? You belong to a golden generation of players like Meg Lanning, Ellyse Perry, Beth Mooney, Ashleigh Gardener, Megan Schutt, Tahlia McGrath...

It's pretty amazing. It's exciting that we have been able to create a culture where players can come in and be the best in the world. Tahlia can come in and perform straightaway and Ash can come in and be an amazing all-rounder. To me that's the most pleasing aspect. And I've got to play alongside Meg and Ellyse, who will probably go down as two of the best players of all time, and that's cool. What we have managed to achieve as a team is the most satisfying part. Yes, I am grateful I was born in this era and got to play for this generation of players. I think the way we have been able to set it up, it's going to be successful for an extended period of time.

You first played with Perry when you were kids and have now won eight World Cups together. How good was little Ellyse? Did you imagine that she would become the cricketer she did?

Yes, I remember her and Meg standing out pretty early. Ellyse was better than half the boys she played against. It was no surprise that she was picked for Australia when she was 16. Her career has lived up to the expectations.

You didn't do badly while playing with the boys, either. You kept wicket to them, didn't you?

Yes, I held my own. I have played with boys all along, and that has helped.

How much help do you get from your uncle, former Australian wicketkeeper Ian Healy?

I don't get as much help from him as probably everybody thinks, but that's okay. I didn't grow up in Queensland. When I started playing for Australia, he played as much of a role as he could. It is great to have someone at the other end of the phone to chat about wicketkeeping. What I really love about him as a 'keeping coach is that he is really simple and old school. And my 'keeping is old school, too.

Which 'keepers have you looked up to?

Uncle Ian obviously, but if you look at my style of keeping, it's more like Brad Haddin. In my opinion, Tim Paine is one of the best glovemen in the world. So I look up to probably the three best glovemen Australia has had.

Australia and India and have been involved in some great contests in women's cricket over the last few years...

I think it is ultra-competitive, isn't it? Everybody wants to beat Australia, which we understand. We are sort of hunted at the top. India are probably the most competitive side in that bracket outside England. You can see how much India want to beat Australia in key moments, and I think that is great for the sport. That competition is going to drive the game forward. Yes, it can get tense in the field at times, but our rivalry is just going to make the game better.

STACKING UP

ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Carlos Alcaraz	19	7,420	18
2	Novak Djokovic	35	7,160	15
3	Stefanos Tsitsipas	24	5,770	21
4	Casper Ruud	24	5,560	24
5	Daniil Medvedev	27	4,330	23
6	Felix Auger-Aliassime	22	3,415	27
7	Andrey Rublev	25	3,390	25
8	Holger Rune	19	3,325	26
9	Hubert Hurkacz	26	3,065	22
10	Taylor Fritz	25	2,975	23
11	Jannik Sinner	21	2,925	20
12	Cameron Norrie	27	2,815	23
13	Rafael Nadal	36	2,715	13
14	Frances Tiafoe	25	2,710	23
15	Alexander Zverev	25	2,580	19

Top Indians ▸

Sumit Nagal
Rank 374 ▲ 5 spots

Mukund Sasikumar
Rank 401 ▲ 2 spots

WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Iga Swiatek	21	9,975	17
2	Aryna Sabalenka	24	6,740	19
3	Jessica Pegula	29	5,605	17
4	Caroline Garcia	29	4,990	23
5	Ons Jabeur	28	4,976	16
6	Coco Gauff	19	4,401	18
7	Elena Rybakina	23	3,720	22
8	Daria Kasatkina	25	3,375	24
9	Belinda Bencic	26	3,360	21
10	Maria Sakkari	27	3,191	23
11	Veronika Kudermetova	25	2,470	21
12	Petra Kvitova	33	2,377	18
13	Barbora Krejcikova	27	2,324	18
14	Beatriz Haddad Maia	26	2,276	25
15	Liudmila Samsonova	24	2,191	21

Top Indians ▸

Ankita Raina
Rank 226 ▲ 15 spots

Karman Thandi
Rank 272 ▼ 4 spots

English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Arsenal	28	22	3	3	66	26	40	69
2	Man. City	27	19	4	4	67	25	42	61
3	Man. United	26	15	5	6	41	35	6	50
4	Tottenham	28	15	4	9	52	40	12	49
5	Newcastle	26	12	11	3	39	19	20	47
6	Liverpool	26	12	6	8	47	29	18	42
7	Brighton	25	12	6	7	46	31	15	42
8	Brentford	27	10	12	5	43	34	9	42
9	Fulham	27	11	6	10	38	37	1	39
10	Chelsea	27	10	8	9	29	28	1	38
11	Aston Villa	27	11	5	11	35	39	-4	38
12	Palace	28	6	9	13	22	38	-16	27
13	Wolves	28	7	6	15	22	41	-19	27
14	Leeds	27	6	8	13	35	44	-9	26
15	Everton	28	6	8	14	22	40	-18	26
16	Nott. Forest	27	6	8	13	22	49	-27	26
17	Leicester	27	7	4	16	38	47	-9	25
18	West Ham	26	6	6	14	24	34	-10	24
19	Bournemouth	27	6	6	15	25	54	-29	24
20	Southampton	28	6	5	17	23	46	-23	23

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Barcelona	26	22	2	2	49	9	40	68
2	Real Madrid	26	17	5	4	51	21	30	56
3	Atletico Madrid	26	15	6	5	42	19	23	51
4	Real Sociedad	26	14	6	6	35	24	11	48
5	Real Betis	26	13	6	7	34	26	8	45
6	Villarreal	26	12	5	9	32	24	8	41
7	Athletic Bilbao	26	10	6	10	36	28	8	36
8	Rayo Vallecano	26	9	9	8	31	30	1	36
9	Osasuna	26	9	7	10	22	27	-5	34
10	Celta Vigo	26	9	7	10	32	35	-3	34
11	Real Mallorca	26	9	5	12	22	27	-5	32
12	Girona	26	8	7	11	40	41	-1	31
13	Getafe	26	7	8	11	27	34	-7	29
14	Sevilla	26	7	7	12	29	42	-13	28
15	Cadiz	26	6	10	10	21	38	-17	28
16	Real Valladolid	26	8	4	14	20	38	-18	28
17	Espanyol	26	6	9	11	32	42	-10	27
18	Valencia	26	7	5	14	28	31	-3	26
19	Almeria	26	7	5	14	30	45	-15	26
20	Elche	26	2	7	17	19	51	-32	13

Italian Serie A Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Napoli	27	23	2	2	64	16	48	71
2	Lazio	27	15	7	5	42	19	23	52
3	Inter Milan	27	16	2	9	47	31	16	50
4	AC Milan	27	14	6	7	44	36	8	48
5	Roma	27	14	5	8	35	26	9	47
6	Atalanta	27	13	6	8	44	31	13	45
7	Juventus *	27	17	5	5	45	22	23	41
8	Udinese	27	9	11	7	37	31	6	38
9	Fiorentina	27	10	7	10	32	31	1	37
10	Bologna	27	10	7	10	33	36	-3	37
11	Torino	27	10	7	10	29	33	-4	37
12	Sassuolo	27	10	6	11	35	40	-5	36
13	Monza	27	9	7	11	32	37	-5	34
14	Empoli	27	6	10	11	24	36	-12	28
15	Lecce	27	6	9	12	24	32	-8	27
16	Salernitana	27	6	9	12	31	47	-16	27
17	Spezia	27	5	9	13	23	43	-20	24
18	Verona	27	4	7	16	22	41	-19	19
19	Sampdoria	27	3	6	18	16	44	-28	15
20	Cremonese	27	1	10	16	22	49	-27	13

** 15 points deducted after investigation into club's past transfer dealings*

German Bundesliga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Dortmund	25	17	2	6	55	31	24	53
2	Bayern	25	15	7	3	72	27	45	52
3	Union Berlin	25	14	6	5	38	28	10	48
4	SC Freiburg	25	13	7	5	38	34	4	46
5	RB Leipzig	25	13	6	6	49	30	19	45
6	Eint. Frankfurt	25	11	7	7	46	36	10	40
7	Wolfsburg	25	10	8	7	44	32	12	38
8	Leverkusen	25	11	4	10	45	40	5	37
9	Mainz	25	10	7	8	40	36	4	37
10	M'gladbach	25	8	7	10	40	44	-4	31
11	Werder Bremen	25	9	4	12	39	48	-9	31
12	FC Augsburg	25	8	4	13	32	45	-13	28
13	Cologne	25	6	9	10	33	44	-11	27
14	Bochum	25	8	1	16	27	56	-29	25
15	Hoffenheim	25	6	4	15	33	45	-12	22
16	Hertha Berlin	25	5	6	14	30	48	-18	21
17	Schalke	25	4	9	12	21	45	-24	21
18	Stuttgart	25	4	8	13	29	42	-13	20

Test Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Marnus Labuschagne	915	937
2	Kane Williamson	883	919
3	Steve Smith	872	947
4	Joe Root	871	923
5	Babar Azam	862	882
6	Travis Head	853	853
7	Usman Khawaja	815	815
8	Daryl Mitchell	792	800
9	Rishabh Pant	766	801
10	Dimuth Karunaratne	749	782

Test Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	R. Ashwin	869	904
2	James Anderson	859	903
3	Pat Cummins	841	914
4	Kagiso Rabada	825	902
5	Shaheen Afridi	787	836
6	Ollie Robinson	785	820
7	Jasprit Bumrah	780	835
8	Nathan Lyon	757	774
9	Ravindra Jadeja	753	899
10	Kyle Jamieson	742	836

ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	887	898
2	Rassie van der Dussen	777	796
3	Imam-ul-Haq	740	815
4	Quinton de Kock	740	813
5	Shubman Gill	738	738
6	David Warner	726	880
7	Virat Kohli	719	911
7	Rohit Sharma	707	885
9	Steve Smith	702	752
10	Fakhar Zaman	699	779

ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Josh Hazlewood	705	733
2	Trent Boult	701	775
3	Mohammed Siraj	691	736
3	Mitchell Starc	686	783
5	Rashid Khan	659	806
6	Adam Zampa	652	655
7	Shaheen Afridi	641	688
8	Mujeeb Ur Rahman	637	712
9	Shakib Al Hasan	636	717
10	Matt Henry	635	691

T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Suryakumar Yadav	906	910
2	Mohammad Rizwan	811	875
3	Devon Conway	768	831
4	Babar Azam	755	896
5	Aiden Markram	748	796
6	Rilee Rossouw	724	724
7	Muhammad Waseem	716	716
8	Dawid Malan	705	915
9	Aaron Finch	680	900
10	Jos Buttler	670	674

T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Rashid Khan	710	816
2	Wanindu Hasaranga	695	797
3	Fazalhaq Farooqi	692	692
4	Josh Hazlewood	690	806
5	Adil Rashid	684	746
6	Adam Zampa	678	743
7	Sam Curran	673	688
8	Mujeeb Ur Rahman	668	745
9	Anrich Nortje	667	695
10	Mitchell Santner	657	731

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Statewide rollout of 'Kaveri 2' from today

In Bengaluru, the new web-based application will be implemented from the last week of May; it is expected to bring convenience to the public during the registration of property

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The much-awaited rollout of 'Kaveri 2', which is expected to bring convenience to the public during the registration of property, will start across the State in phases from Saturday. The pilot project in five sub-registrar's offices across the State over the last two months has shown that the registration time for documents has come down to about 15 minutes as against hours of waiting earlier.

While the Statewide rollout will begin from Chickballapur district on Saturday, the process is expected to be completed by July first week in Dakshina Kannada. In Bengaluru, which generates about 70% of the total revenue collected in the State, the software will be implemented from the last week of May till the third week of June, involving district-level sub-registrar's offices of Basavanagudi, Gandhinagar, Jayanagar, Rajajinagar, and Shivajinagar.

Under Kaveri 2, the property registration process is expected to be efficient and time-saving.

Time-saving process

Under Kaveri 2, the registration process is expected to be efficient and time-saving as pre-registration work would be completed before a person visits the sub-registrar's office for registration.

Currently, as part of running the pilot launch at Chincholi sub-registrar's office, Kaveri 2 is being run in Belagavi, Mandya, Doddaballapur, and Ballari sub-registrar offices. "From the experience reported from the five offices, one registration is taking on an average less than 15 minutes instead of several hours of waiting period earlier. However, the registration time is dependent on the number of people involved in the registration of documents," said a Revenue Department source.

"During the next three-and-a-half months, all the 256 sub-registrar's offices will be covered, with an average of four offices covered daily. All the technicalities have been tightened and we hope the Statewide rollout will be smooth," said the source.

So far, more than ₹11 crore revenue has been collected after implementing Kaveri 2 in the five sub-registrar's offices.

Toll up on Mysuru expressway

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Within a month of its inauguration, motorists using the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway will have to shell out more as toll charges are set to increase from Saturday in accordance with the National Highways Authority of India's (NHAI) decision to increase toll charges on all highways.

While the toll charge for a single-way journey on the expressway for cars was ₹135, it will now increase to ₹165 and for a return journey on the same day, the charges will jump from ₹205 to ₹250. Similarly, light commercial vehicles (LCV) and mini-buses will have to pay ₹270 instead of ₹220 for a one-way trip and ₹405 (earlier ₹330) for a return journey while buses and trucks will have to pay ₹565 and ₹850 for a single-way and two-way journey, respectively.

Updated toll charges from today

On KIA road

Vehicle	New fare for single way	Old fare	New fare for return on the same day	Old fare
Car	110	105	170	160
LCV, LGV, mini-bus	170	165	260	245
Bus/truck	345	330	520	495

On Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway

Vehicle	New fare for single way	Old fare	New fare for return on the same day	Old fare
Car	165	135	250	205
LCV, LGV, mini-bus	270	220	405	330
Bus/truck	565	460	850	690

With even the NHAI's first announcement to collect toll on the expressway attracting backlash from motorists and the Opposition parties, the hike in the charges has irked motorists further. They argued that toll collection was not justified when the work on the expressway was not complete, and said that the NHAI should have waited for the work to get over before increasing the toll.

Commuters argued that toll collection was not justified when the work on the expressway itself was not complete and said that the NHAI should have waited for the work to get over before increasing the toll. "The toll collection began just a few weeks ago and the charges were higher as they were. Now, this will burn a bigger hole in the pockets of motorists. They should have waited for at least a year and increased the toll charges from April 2024 for this expressway," said Daksha Kumar, a regular commuter.

Meanwhile, Pratap Simha, Mysuru MP, said on his social media handle, "As there are still some small works going on on the expressway, I have requested the NHAI chairman, Project director and the regional officer to temporarily withhold the hike."

On airport road

Those travelling to and from the Kempegowda International Airport will also have to pay more in toll charges now as the toll for a single-way commute by car will go up from ₹105 to ₹110 and the return trip will be charged ₹170 instead of the earlier ₹160.

673 students graduate from IIMB; eight awarded gold medals

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) held its 48th convocation ceremony on Friday during which 673 students from various programmes graduated. In all, eight students were awarded gold medals for first and second ranks as well as best all-around performance.

The gold medal winners at the IIMB convocation in Bengaluru on Friday.

While 16 students graduated from the doctoral programme, 73 students graduated from the Postgraduate Programme in Enterprise and the Executive Postgraduate Programme in Management. Further, 39 students from the Postgraduate Programme in Business Analytics, and 472 Postgraduate Programme in Management students were awarded degrees.

Padma Bhushan recipient Baba Kalyani, chairman and managing director of Bharat Forge Ltd., in his convocation address, said, "India as a country is today at the forefront and has emerged as a major force to reckon with. You, as young professionals equipped with learnings from a premier business school, must assume the role of catalysts or agents of change and impress on others the need to think differently. As individuals, we must stop expecting others, including the government or society, to change first. We must instead make ourselves the pivots of change."

Special postal cover

To commemorate the 50th year of IIMB, a special postal cover was released on Friday on the campus by Kaiya Arora, Director of Postal Services (HQ), Karnataka Circle. The cover was designed by the IIMB in association with India Post.

Here is what the first rank holders said about themselves and their plans.

Pankaj Jindal: He is the first rank holder in the Executive Postgraduate Programme in Management 2022-23. Apart from consistent academic performance, 31-year-old Mr. Jindal from Rajasthan also won prizes in various business competitions during the programme. While his father is a retired government official, his mother is a homemaker and his wife works at a multinational company. Speaking about his future, Mr. Jindal said he wants to take up a strategic role overseeing the larger goals of the organisation, and to transition from the core manufacturing sector to the IT and Data Analytics sector.

Manshul Arora: First rank holder in the Postgraduate Programme in Enterprise Management 2021-23, Mr. Arora, 31, hails from an agricultural family in Haryana. His father, he said, had migrated to city to provide a better future for his children. Mr. Arora secured a scholarship at IIMB as he was the top candidate on the Director's Merit list. He went to IE University in Madrid, Spain, for an exchange term. Sharing his future plans, he said, "I am keen to make an impact in the semiconductor industry. With skyrocketing demand, geopolitical tensions and the rising importance of sustainability, the sector is ripe for transformation and change. I want to be an effective participant in this transformation process."

Mridul Sureka: He is the first rank holder in the Postgraduate Programme in Management 2021-23. Hailing from Kolkata, 23-year-old Mr. Sureka secured perfect grades of 4.00 in 24 out of the 27 courses he pursued at IIMB with an A grade in all 27 courses. While he received six scholarships for his academic achievements at IIMB, he was also awarded an Exchange Scholarship by the French Embassy. During his exchange programme at HEC Paris, he achieved perfect scores in seven out of nine courses. While Mr. Mridul Sureka's parents have their own business in the textile sector in Kolkata, he wants to build a career in private equity investing and dreams to make a positive business impact. He added that he aspired to serve the country in economic policy making later in his career.

Sarthak Jain: He is the first rank holder in the Postgraduate Programme in Business Analytics 2021-23. Before pursuing his MBA at IIMB, 25-year-old Mr. Jain had gotten an electrical engineering degree from IIT Delhi and worked as a quantitative analyst in Mumbai. His father and grandfather both held jobs with the Rajasthan government and his mother is a homemaker. One of Mr. Jain's achievements during the programme included the deliverance of a live consulting project for the department of aerospace engineering at IISc. About his plans, he said, "I want to pursue my career as a business consultant for the initial few years to gain professional experience, understand the range of real-world problems that businesses face, and how strategic decisions can help solve these problems. I believe such experiences can help me work towards my broader goal in life, which is to start a venture capital firm aimed specifically at providing strategic guidance and hence helping develop start-ups looking to make a real social impact."

Balaram, ex-director of IISc, is ATREE chairperson

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) announced the appointment of Balaram, current co-chair of the board of trustees of ATREE, as chairperson of the board, effective April 2023.

The current chairperson, Kamal Bawa, stepped down from the board of trustees on Friday.

Mr. Bawa had been the chairperson of ATREE's board of trustees since its inception in 1996. He has played a huge role in shaping the organisation's research and conservation agenda.

MOSIP workshop

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

A two-day workshop called 'MOSIP Country Conversations 2023' was held at the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore recently in which around 60 delegates from 12 countries, development partners, advisers, World Bank, Government of India departments, and other stakeholders participated.

Modular Open Source Identity Platform (MOSIP) is a digital identity open source platform developed in the IIITB and rolled out in five countries as National Digital Identity. Seven other countries are also using it as a pilot for the rollout.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, ANANDAPUR BARRAGE PROJECT, SALAPADA
(E-mail id:cceabp@gmail.com/loabpbbsr@gmail.com)
E-procurement Notice No. CCEABP-20 of 2022-23

E-Procurment officer	Name of the work	Bid id No	Tender cost in Lakhs (Appx)	Bid security (Online)	Cost of Bid Document (Online)	Class of contractor	Period of completion	Availability of tender on line for bidding		Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-1)
								From	To	
Chief Construction Engineer A.B Project, Salapada	Excavation and Cement Concrete Lining of Baitarani Right Bank Canal (BRBC) from RD 2680m to RD 3400m and balance work from RD 00m to 2680m including construction of structures and service road	ABP-ACD-01/20 of 2022-23	2227.00	22,27,000/-	10,000/-	Spl. & Super Class	14 Calendar months	04.04.23 11.30 AM	24.04.23 5.00PM	25.04.23 11.30AM

Further details can be seen from the Govt website www.tendersorissa.gov.in/www.dowrodisha.gov.in Addendum/corrigendum/ cancellation if any required will be published in Govt. website only.
Chief Construction Engineer, Anandapur Barrage Project, Salapada.
A-1319 OIPR-32068/11/0029/2223

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Baby Kalpana ShivaKumar W/o B.S.Shivakumar R/a No.12, 2nd Cross, S.S.Puram, Tumkur. I do here by solemnly affirm and state oath as that in my S.S.L.C. Marks card my name mentioned as Baby Kalpana and after my marriage in my Aadhaar Card mentioned as Kalpana Shivakumar, in my PassPort and in Karnataka Bank S.S.Puram branch to be mentioned as **Baby Kalpana Shivakumar Begur (New Name)** in all her future records, deeds, writings, proceedings, transactions private as well as upon all occasions whatsoever vide affidavit sworn before Advocate and Notary T. N. Bharathi on 30.03.2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general Public that my client **Smt. SUMATHI ANANDAN w/o R. ANANDAN** is intended to purchase the Property bearing Vacant Site No:- 455, in M.S Ramaiha City, formed in Land Bering Survey no 88 (P)&97(P) of Kothanur Village, UttraHalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk measuring East to West 55 feet, North to South 33 feet totally measuring about 1815 Square feet, **from its Owner Sri, CHINTALA SURENDAR KUMAR** and the owner and the agreement holder have handed over the Xerox copies of the documents in respect of the Property to my client. Any person having objection for sale of the Property or any claim or interest in the Property may lodge the same with documentary proof with the undersigned **within 7 Days** from the date of publication of this Notice. Any objection received thereafter will not be entertained and my client will proceed to purchase the Property in accordance with law.

SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the **Property bearing Vacant Site No:- Site No:- 455, in M.S Ramaiha City, formed in Land Bering Survey no 88 (P) &97(P) of Kothanur Village, Uttra Halli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk measuring East to West 55 feet, North to South 33 feet totally measuring about 1815 Square feet** and bounded on the: **East by :** Site No.448, **West by :** Road, **North by:**Site No.454, **South by:**Site No.456.

KRUTHINE LAW CHAMBERS, Advocates
No.47, Jaya Mansion, 5th Cross, 5th Main Road, Malleshwaram, Bangalore - 560 003, Ph: 9448808844/9880528844/9844233994.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the General Public that my Client has entered into an Agreement of Sale with **1. SRI.K.S.SATHISH alias SATHISHA K.S, Aged about 41 years and, SRI. K.S.BALAJI,** Aged about 40 years, both are sons Sri. K.S.Srinivasa Gupta, and residing at Ganigara Pete, Near Gayathri Vidya Mandira, Hoskote, Bengaluru Rural District, PIN: 562114 for purchase of residential Vacant sites which is more fully described in the Schedule hereunder. Hence, if any person/s has/have any right, title, interest, objection or claim on the below mentioned Schedule Property, they may file their objections with the undersigned along with documentary proof **WITHIN 15 (FIFTEEN) DAYS** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which my Client will proceed to complete the sale transaction as the same is free from all encumbrances/claims. Any objections received thereafter will not be entertained/ considered.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

All the Piece and parcel of the Vacant residential Sites bearing **Nos.12 & 13,** Present **Khata No.236/338/12/13,** formed out of converted Sy.No.89 (Vide conversion order bearing No. **B.DIS.ALN.SR(S)204/91-92 dated 28.11.2011)** of Doddakallasandra Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, totally measuring East to West: 60-0 feet and North to South: 40-0 feet, totally measuring : **2400 Square feet** and presently comes within the BBMP Ward No.197 of Vasanthapura Ward, presently known and identified as **"# 12&13, 2nd Cross, Doctors Colony, PNB Layout Main Road, Konanakunte, Bengaluru-560 062"** and bounded on the :-

East by : Site No.11, West by : Site No.14, North by : Private Property and South by : Road.

(U.L.SOMAPPA) Advocate & Notary
 # 708/41, Upstairs, Sree Ramanjaneya Road Srinagar, Bangalore-560050.
(M) 94480 50108, 98806 14954
Bangalore Date : 31-03-2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby informed that my clients intend to purchase the property morefully described in the schedule hereunder from its present owners, **(1) SRI. R.PALANIAPPAN,** aged about 48 years, son of Sri. P L Ramanathan, the owner of Item No.1, **(2) SMT. DEEPA P,** aged about 46 years, wife of Mr. R. Palaniappan, the owner of Item No.2, both residing in Chennai -600006, both having acquired title to the Schedule Property in terms of two separate Sale Deeds executed by M/s. Ambattur Constructions Limited in their favour as mentioned in the Schedule Property.

Any persons/firms/companies/financial institutions etc. having or claiming any share, right, title, estate or interest by way of inheritance, sale, mortgage, transfer, lease, tenancy, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, devise, bequest, exchange, pre-emption, possession or encumbrance or otherwise howsoever into or upon the Schedule Property herein below described, are called upon to intimate the same in writing to the undersigned at the below given address along with all the documents relating to such claim within **10 days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any such claim of any party shall be deemed to have been waived for all legal practical purposes and shall not be entertained hereafter, and I shall opine that the Schedule Property is free of any claims and my clients will be free to proceed with the proposed purchase of the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

The below properties are situated in the commercial building known as **RMZ Futura II** constructed on land measuring 1,29,624 sq ft comprised in **Sy No. 148/1** of **Bilekahalli Village,** Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk and bounded as follows:

East : Partly by balance portion of land in Sy. No. 148/1 and partly by property belonging to Late A.Annamalai ;
West : Bannerghatta Main Road ;
North : Partly by road and partly by property belonging to Late.A.Annamalai ;
South : Balance portion of the land in Sy No. 148/1.

Item No. 1 – Owner – Mr. R Palaniappan
ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of office area situated on the **Second Floor** admeasuring **10,000 sq. ft.** along with an undivided share of **153 sq. ft.** (out of a total of 1745 sq ft) of the exclusive Reception area on the Ground Floor for the Occupants of the Ground, First and Second Floors and an undivided share of **252 sq ft** (out of total of 1520 Sq ft) of the common 2.5m wide passage on the Second Floor, all together admeasuring a total of **10,405 sq ft** together with **9 car parking spaces in the open area** and **5 car parking spaces in the stilt area** on a portion of the Ground Floor together with a proportionate **5.86%** (i.e. 7595.74 sq ft or 705.66 sq mt) undivided share, right, title and interest in the land as mentioned above, purchased under Document No: BMH-1-05228-2012-13 dated 26.09.2012.

Item No. 2 – Owner – Smt. Deepa P.
ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the office area situated on the **Second Floor** admeasuring **21,130 sq. ft.** along with an undivided share of **323 sq. ft.** (out of a total of 1745 sq ft) of the exclusive Reception on the Ground Floor for the occupants of the Ground, First and Second Floors and an undivided share of **533 sq ft** (out of total of 1520 Sq ft) of the common 2.5m wide passage on the Second Floor all together admeasuring a total of **21,986 sq ft** together with **17 car parking spaces in the open area** and **11 car parking spaces in the stilt parking area** on a portion of the Ground Floor together with proportionate **12.38%** (i.e. 16049.97 sq ft or 1491.08 sq mt) undivided share, right, title and interest in the land as mentioned above, purchased under Document No. BMH-1-05221-2012-13 dated 26.09.2012.

Vivek Anand Anthony Britto
Vir Anthony Britto
Advocates
"Daisville", 633, 5th Main, Indiranagar II Stage, Bengaluru-560038
Place: Bengaluru Date: 31.03.2023

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SANTOSH, S/o Basavarajayya Kodekalmat, R/o No.515, Kodekal, Yadgir-585237 presently camped at Bangalore, have changed my name from Santosh to Santosh Kodekalmath vide affidavit dated 30-03-2023 before Notary Gangaraju. B. N, Bangalore.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-62)
ORIGINAL SUIT NO. 6674 OF 2022
Hg: 15/06/2023

BETWEEN :
ICICI Bank Ltd.
A body corporate incorporated And registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956 and licensed As a Bank under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 having Registered Office at "Landmark", Race Course Circle, Vadodara- 390007 And having its Regional office at ICICI Bank Ltd., 11th Floor, C-Wing, Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bengaluru- 560 001. And represented by its POA Holder, Mr. M Rohit Ali, S/o Ishrath Ali M, Aged about 25 years, ...PLAINTIFF

And
Mr. SHIVA KUMAR M, S/o Subhash Mehtre, Aged about 35 years, R/a No.3, Ground Floor, Poultry Farm Compound, Opp BVNH School, Devasandra Main Road, K.R. Puram, Bengaluru- 560 036
...DEFENDANT

Summons/ Notice through Paper Publication

Defendant
Mr. SHIVA KUMAR M, S/o Subhash Mehtre, Aged about 35 years, R/a No.3, Ground Floor, Poultry Farm Compound, Opp BVNH School, Devasandra Main Road, K.R. Puram, Bengaluru- 560 036.
...DEFENDANT

WHEREAS the above named Plaintiff has instituted case against you for recovery loan amount **Rs. 6,92,351/-** together with interest at the rate **18% p.a.** from date of due to till the date of realization.
You are hereby summoned to appear before this Hon'ble Court in person or by a advocate/pleader on **15/06/2023** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer the questions of the same. Failing which the matter will be heard and determined as **"EX-PARTE".**
Given under my hand and seal of the Court on this day of **16th day of March, 2023.**

By order of the Court
Assistant Registrar
City Civil Court, Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
Mr. K.N. Arvinda Navada
Advocate
No.177/1, (88), 1st Floor, Besides 12th Cross, Cubbonpet Main Road, Bengaluru- 560002

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE XXXVIK ADDL. CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH No.38)
O.S No. 3534/2022

To
BETWEEN: Himmatmal. S. Kankaria, Aged about 52 years, Son of Sri. Sohanraj Kankaria. Proprietor of Honesty Garments, Shop No.5 (earlier bearing Shop No.1) Ground Floor, RBDGTC Building (earlier known as JBR Plaza), Mamulpet, Belli Basavanna Gudi Beedhi, Bengaluru-560 053. **Plaintiff**
AND:
1. Rao Bahadur Dharmapravartha, Gubbi Thotadappa Charities, No.88, RBDGTC Building, Near City Railway Station, Gubbi Thotadappa Road, Bengaluru-560 023. Represented by its President/Secretary.
2. Vikram Kumar R, S/o. Sri. K. Ramesh Kumar Jain, Aged about 46 years, residing at No.12/13, 1st Floor, Bommalinganna Mansion, 3rd Cross, SV Lane, Chickpet, Bengaluru-560 053. **Defendants**

Summons to DEFENDANT No.2 under Order V Rule 20(1A) of Civil Procedure Code.

To D2 Vikram Kumar R, S/o K. Ramesh Kumar Jain, 46 years, R/at No. 12/13, 1st Floor, Bomma Linganna mansion, 3rd Cross, S.V. Lane, Chickpet, Bangalore-53.
WHEREAS, the Plaintiff has instituted the above suit for permanent injunction restraining the Defendant No.1. its Trustees, office bearers, representatives, agents or anybody claiming through or under it from interfering with his possession and enjoyment of the Suit Schedule Property and you have been arrayed as Defendant No.2 in the above suit. You are hereby summoned to appear in this court in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions on the 20th day of April 2023 at 11.00 in the forenoon.
Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned the Petition will be proceeded with and determined in your absence.

SCHEDULE PREMISES

All that piece and parcel of Shop bearing No.5 (earlier to that assigned with Shop No.1) having built up area of 162 sq.ft. in the commercial building now called RBDGTC Building (earlier to that known as JBR Plaza) constructed on the immovable property presently bearing No.104 (Old No.36 and earlier to that bearing No.35), situated at Belli Basavanna Gudi Beedhi, Mamulpet, Bengaluru-560053 and bounded on the **East by:** Shop No.4, **West by:** Shop No.6 and Shop No.7, **North by:** Shop No. 12, **South by:** Main Road.
Given under my hand and seal on this the 23rd day of March 2023.

By Order of the Court
Assistant Registrar City Civil Court, Bengaluru Advocate for Plaintiff:
Sri. Ganesh Bhat Y.H., Advocate, # 22, 1 Floor, Yamunabai Road, Madhavanagar, Bengaluru-560 001.

TENDERS

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Invited for supply of souvenirs for sale in Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady, Kerala.

For Details:
www.periyartigerreserve.org
Last date: 25/04/2023, 11.00 am

GETTY IMAGES

> It's a big honour to be compared to Babe Ruth. But it's a small sample size. I want to try and improve each year and hopefully after it's over, it will be somewhat comparable
>
> **OHTANI**

'Shotime' Ohtani – the unicorn on a blockbuster run

The Japanese baseball star is a jaw-dropping outlier: a two-way virtuoso, elite with both bat and ball in a sport that has become increasingly specialised

Srinivasan Ramani

Virtuoso, versatile, unicorn – these are the adjectives that emanate from every baseball analyst and aficionado asked to describe Shohei Ohtani. The 6'4" Japanese player is indeed in a class of his own – a true all-rounder in a sport that has become specialised like no other in recent years.

Ohtani is the only man to have played as both lead pitcher and everyday batter in the same Major League Baseball (MLB) season in a century. He won the Most Valuable Player (MVP) award for his two-way excellence, batting southpaw and pitching right-handed, in 2021 and finished a close second in 2022.

He topped these achievements with a spectacular performance for Japan in the World Baseball Classic (WBC) last month. He starred in his country's third triumph – the most for any nation in the competition's five editions – and was the tournament's MVP.

Ohtani wasn't just pulling double duty against the United States, baseball's powerhouse cradle, in the WBC final in Miami. He scored a hit, walked once and, in the last (ninth) inning, turned closing pitcher – a specialised role requiring a different mentality to the starting pitcher's.

The US was trailing 2-3 but had three recent MLB MVPs lined up to bat – Mookie Betts (2018), Mike Trout (2019) and Paul Goldschmidt (2022) – following pinch-hitter Jeff McNeal.

Ohtani walked McNeal in a rocky start, but quickly recovered and got Betts and McNeal out in a double play, setting up an encounter with Los Angeles Angels teammate Trout, one of the best hitters of this generation, a three-time MVP and also US captain.

> He's a very meticulous preparer. He prepares for hitting and pitching to the nth degree
>
> **MIKE SCIOSCIA**
> Former LA Angels manager

It was showtime baseball and a coincidental moment for the ages. The millions of fans – most of whom were watching on TV sets in Japan – could not have wished for anything better. Trout vs. Ohtani in a must-deliver situation: a power-hitter facing a power-pitcher. Their shared history with the underperforming Angels – the team has not advanced to the MLB playoffs in their five years together – made the match-up all the more fascinating.

Ohtani had elected to play for the Angels after an early switch in 2018 from Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB), Japan's premier league, widely considered the best baseball tourney outside the MLB. He had already wowed scouts and observers with his unique two-way play in the NPB, winning multiple titles and awards by the time he was 23.

Finally, Babe Ruth has company

Ohtani promised to become the first two-way operator in the MLB in nearly a century. The last player with respectable pitching and hitting numbers over a single season was the legendary George Herman 'Babe' Ruth in 1919, when he hit 29 home runs in 543 batting appearances, pitched 133 ⅓ innings and had a 9-5 winning record with an earned run average (ERA, runs allowed per 9 innings pitched) of 2.97.

Ohtani had a tough start in the US, injuries limiting him to a 'designated hitter' role – a batter who does not field. Following the well-known but risky Tommy John surgery to repair his elbow, he worked his way into two-way form only after the pandemic-hit 2020 season.

In 2021, 'Shotime', as Ohtani was soon to be termed, was fully on.

In a dazzling season, Ohtani hit 46 home runs (third in the league) – most of them humongous blasts off the bat with high exit velocity – and recorded a batting average of 0.257 and an on-base plus slugging average of 0.965 (fifth in the league), with 100 runs batted in (RBIs) and 103 runs scored. As a pitcher, he went 9-2, with a 3.18 ERA.

His two-way excellence helped him achieve an estimated Wins above Replacement player (WAR) rating – a measure of a player's value in terms of how many additional wins he would be worth over a replacement-level or fill-in player – of 9.0, the highest in the league. It was no surprise that he was adjudged the league MVP.

In 2022, he was even more well-rounded. His pitching reached new heights, earning him 15 wins (and 9 losses) in 28 starts, 219 strikeouts, a stupendous 2.33 ERA, and 6.2 WAR just as a pitcher. His batting average increased to 0.273, with 34 home runs, 95 RBI and 90 runs. Ohtani had again reached elite levels both as batter and pitcher. His 9.6 WAR was second only to New York Yankees power-hitter and MVP Aaron Judge (10.6).

So, when Ohtani faced Trout, it was an elite match-up.

Ohtani started with a slider that found the catcher's mitt just outside the strike zone, for Ball 1. He followed that with a 100mph fastball bang within the strike zone. Trout whiffed – Strike 1. The next pitch was another 100mph fastball but it just missed the strike zone, for Ball 2. The fourth pitch was a repeat of the second – an accurate 100mph fastball, for Strike 2. The fifth pitch was a 102mph heater that kept low and missed the strike zone, for Ball 3.

Asked later about his strategy, Ohtani revealed that he decided to stick to fast balls after the first lower-velocity slider, as he sensed that Trout seemed to be expecting variety, not straight-up heat. With a full count (3 balls and 2 strikes), however, Ohtani decided to rely on precision and skill in his sixth pitch – a beautiful 87mph slider that swayed away from Trout's bat-swing in a perfect trajectory, delivering Strike 3 and a 3-2 victory for Japan.

Over the course of a fortnight of baseball, Ohtani had a dream run with both bat and ball – 0.435 batting average with a home run and several key hits (including a pivotal ninth-inning hit against Mexico in the semifinals), a 1.86 ERA as pitcher and a vital save as closing pitcher in a nerve-racking final. His MVP selection was a no-brainer.

Winning a battle on two fronts

Being an all-rounder requires an inordinate level of skill and work. Batters need to develop strong levels of anticipation, hand-eye coordination, power and balance and require hours in batting cages to hone these skills. Pitchers need to build arm and shoulder strength and practise for hours and hours before their muscle memory can execute a variety of skills with precision.

Ohtani's rigorous regimen has allowed him to maintain high levels in both facets, with his natural athleticism giving him the added advantage of elite speed when base-running and strength when power-hitting. He manned the outfield capably in Japan but has been spared those duties in the MLB because of the already heavy workload.

Ohtani's elite numbers as both batter and pitcher make him an eye-catching outlier, with barely any precedence in the professional annals of America's favourite pastime. One of the most unique athletes in the world, he is a bona fide unicorn.

GAME THEORY

Measuring a supreme creative force

Mesut Ozil's retirement brings to a close an illustrious career which contained a World Cup triumph, trophies in three countries, and 121 goals and 262 assists for club and country. A look at the midfield maestro's career in numbers:

6 Ozil has been the top assist provider in at least one edition or season of six major competitions: World Cup, Euros, Bundesliga, LaLiga, Premier League, Champions League

7 Chances created in his last World Cup game against South Korea in 2018, the most for a single match in the edition

10 One of only five players to have created at least 10 chances from open play in three different World Cups (since 1966). Lionel Messi, Diego Maradona, Wolfgang Overath and Thomas Muller the others

23 Goals scored for Germany

40 Assists provided for Germany

81 Assists notched up for Real Madrid (all competitions). His most for a club; includes a streak of topping LaLiga's charts for three straight seasons

98 Goals scored in his club career

222 Assists supplied in his club career

146 Chances created in the 2015-16 Premier League season (for Arsenal) — the most ever

PICTURE THIS

HARRY MURPHY/SPORTSFILE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Horse pursuit

A snapshot of the action from the Cheltenham Racing Festival recently held at scenic Prestbury Park in Gloucestershire, England.

The Cheltenham Festival is both historic and lucrative, its roots dating back well over a century and the prize money on offer second only to the Grand National in the United Kingdom.

A supreme test for chasers and hurdlers, it was described as "our Olympics" by champion jockey Tony McCoy.

The Festival has expanded over the years: it's now a four-day affair with 28 races.

The Stayers' Hurdle, first run in 1912, is the oldest race. The Gold Cup is the most valuable non-handicap chase in Britain, with a total prize fund of £625,000.

Cheltenham's boisterous atmosphere is famous: the iconic 'Cheltenham roar' has entered pop culture, even being sampled in a dance anthem.

The Festival isn't free from controversy, however.

There were fears in 2020 that it had increased the spread of COVID-19, with one visitor saying the punters were "packed like sardines". And the number of horse injuries and fatalities is often a subject of investigation by the British Horseracing Authority.

WhatsApp group admins step in to restrict political messages, fake news

Many of them have come up with an unwritten code of conduct for group members in the run-up to the Assembly elections in the State

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

As election fever catches up in Karnataka, WhatsApp group admins are sending out disclaimer messages to group members to be cautious in sending unnecessary political forwards and requesting them not to put political messages in the groups.

Ubiquitous during elections and otherwise, reigning in unverified advertisements, photographs, hate speeches, and fake news on the platform has been a challenge for a long time. With conversations about politics heating up as the elections near, many admins, tired of political arguments and messages, are putting up restrictions on such chats and coming up with an unwritten code of conduct for groups.

One such message in Kannada on a WhatsApp group reads, "Since there is a model code of conduct in the State due to the elections, political debates, chats, fake news on politicians or political parties are not entertained in this group and members have to restrict putting up such messages in the group and the admins are not responsible for any such messages."

Illustration: Sebastian Francis

Mohan D. on Bengaluru, an admin for a WhatsApp group, has also requested participants to restrict any politically motivated and misleading messages. "Before elections were announced, there were a few fake and propaganda-based political messages being circulated in the groups. But after the election date was announced, we are seeing a lot of such messages, which not only create fake propaganda but also lead to unnecessary political debates. Then we thought of warning the group members to avoid such messages."

Praveen Raj, another admin, shared his experience on how such political messages are harming their real-life relationships. "From the last seven years, our group of friends were on a WhatsApp group. Initially, political debates and jokes were welcome, but later, there were political debates and fake political messages, which led to chat fights between members and many of them lost friendships due to such unwarranted political debates. Now, as elections are coming up, we have decided to put up a disclaimer to avoid political debates and messages," Mr. Raj added.

A major tool for political parties

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

WhatsApp is also a big tool for political campaigning.

A volunteer in a social media team of a major political party said, "WhatsApp is one of the major social media platforms to push political campaigns as not just youngsters, but even senior citizens use WhatsApp. So the reach is more. WhatsApp access and engagement time is far more than other social media platforms. We have more than 2,000 WhatsApp groups and are targeting to reach over 5,000."

Karnataka Votes 2023

Meanwhile, the Election Commission is monitoring political advertisements on social media and also fake news. All political advertisements on social media will require pre-certification from the Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMCs) at the district and State levels.

Provisions of the model code of conduct will also apply to the content being posted on social media by candidates and political parties. Any violation can lead to action by the Election Commission. On Thursday, the Election Officer of Madikeri Assembly constituency issued a show-cause notice to one of the WhatsApp group admins for allegedly circulating a politically motivated video clip on groups. The incident happened in Kushalnagar in Kodagu.

The commission has appointed Social Media Nodal Officers for escalation of violation of the MCC or any other commission's instructions/provisions of the law and court's orders in matters related to the election on social media platforms during elections. "Digital advertising should be pre-certified by the MCMCs at the district and State levels," Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka Manoj Kumar Meena said.

From Page One

19-year-old gang-raped

One of the accused approached them and wanted to know what the girl was doing in the park "late in the night with a male friend", leading to an argument between the three and the girl and her friend asking him to mind his own business.

When rebuffed, the accused left the place in a huff. The girl stayed back while the male friend left the place. The accused allegedly came back with three of his friends to the spot a few minutes later, and the gang allegedly dragged the girl into a car and sped away, the police said.

The girl in her complaint alleged that four men took turns to rape her in the car. The police said that the car, now recovered, travelled the city's streets via Domlur, Hosur Road, and NICE Road and took a U-turn just before Attibele police checkpost as the accused feared that they would be caught and returned to Ejipura and dropped off the survivor by the roadside around 3.30 a.m.

The rape survivor reached home and narrated the incident to her mother, with whose help she got treated at a hospital for her injuries, and later filed a complaint with the Koramangala police.

"The accused were all from Ejipura and Rajendranagar and one of them was known to the victim's friend. We tracked all of them down in eight hours and arrested them," Mr. Baba said. The arrested have been identified as Satish, Vijay, Sridhar, and Kiran. While two of them work as office boys in nearby private firms, one was an electrician and another a BPO employee.

Spotlight
Read longform articles from our regional editions

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- **Telangana:** Caution, not panic, advised as COVID cases continue to rise **bit.ly/cautionforcovid**
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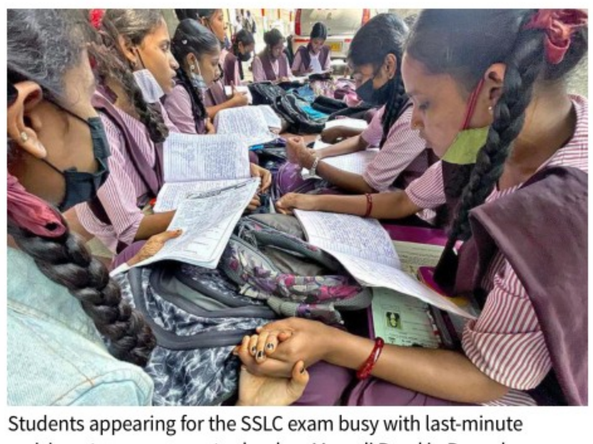
You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access the article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Timely intervention by officials helps 8 students write SSLC exam


Students appearing for the SSLC exam busy with last-minute revision at a government school on Magadi Road in Bengaluru on Friday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

At least eight students of a private unaided school, who were about to miss their Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) examination owing to the fault of the school management, finally appeared for the exam that began on Friday, thanks to timely intervention by officials of the Department of School Education and Literacy and the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB).

Students of the school, located in Bengaluru North zone, had not received their hall ticket as the school was running high school sections illegally. A senior KSEAB official said, "The school has no affiliation for running the high school. They did not register the students for the Class 10 exam."

Gopalakrishna H.N, Director, KSEAB, said, "Around 9 a.m., we received a call from a few parents about the issue and I instructed the officials to make arrangements for these students to take the exam. In the interest of the students' future, we immediately issued the admission tickets and all the students wrote the exam."

However, the board would write to the Department of School Education for action against the school.

"We did not know that our hall tickets were not generated. We attended the classes and paid the fees for the examination. But it was a shock when we realised that the school had not registered our names for the exam. We thank the officials who helped us," a student said.

At 33,077 centres

The exam began in 33,077 centres across Karnataka on Friday. On day one, students appeared for the first language paper – Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, English, and Sanskrit. As many as 98.48% of students appeared for the exam.

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IPL: Namma Metro timings extended

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To handle additional passenger rush during Indian Premier League (IPL) matches, Namma Metro services have been extended on both Purple and Green lines.

The timings have been extended on the days matches are scheduled at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium – on April 2, 10, 17, 26, and May 21, according to a press release.

Last train

The train services from Baiyappanahalli to Kengeri and Nagasandra to Silk Institute will be extended till 1 a.m. and the last train from the Majestic metro station will leave at 1.30 a.m. in all four directions, according to a Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) release.

The BMRCL will issue paper tickets on match days for passengers who board and de-board at M.G. Road and Cubbon Park metro stations at ₹50 which are valid for a single journey.

In addition to these, passengers can also travel using smart cards and QR tickets at normal fares.

However, timings of services between Whitefield and Krishnarajapura have not extended.

Timings
BENGALURU

SATURDAY, APR. 01	
RISE 06:16	SET 18:31
RISE 14:48	SET 03:07
SUNDAY, APR. 02	
RISE 06:15	SET 18:31
RISE 15:37	SET 03:48
MONDAY, APR. 03	
RISE 06:15	SET 18:31
RISE 16:24	SET 04:25

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	33	25
Mysuru	36	23
Bengaluru	35	22

Bengaluru Today
34°C Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant. Spell of rain and thundershower is likely.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
33°C A pleasant morning with mist and haze turns warm day. Night will be pleasant. Chances of rain & thundershower at some places.

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THE HINDU
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Man found killed in Yelahanka, roommates missing

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A man was found murdered and his two roommates were missing in Yelahanka on Thursday evening. The deceased has been identified as Janardhana Bhatta, 29.

He was working in a private firm and living with roommates in a flat.

Hands and legs tied

Neighbours discovered the body of Janaradhana on Thursday evening after they broke open the door when he did not respond for long, and alerted the police. The police found Janardhana's hands and legs tied with plastic ropes and the face taped off.

Janaradhana is suspected to have died of asphyxiation. His roommates, Suleiman and Rizwan, are missing and are suspected to have killed him and fled from the scene, said the police.

The Yelahanka police are trying to track down the two missing roommates.

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INBRIEF

AAP releases second list of 60 candidates

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday released a second list of 60 candidates for the Karnataka Assembly elections. After releasing the candidate list, AAP Karnataka chief Prithvi Reddy said: "All our candidates represent various sections of society. We have selected the candidates after conducting a survey." "In the second list, we have given tickets to 11 women, 14 farmers, 18 lawyers, six doctors, 23 engineers, and a retired BMTC bus conductor," he added. On March 20, the party released the first list of 80 candidates.

SUCI (Communist) announces 13 candidates

Social Unity Centre of India (Communist) on Friday announced candidates for Assembly elections to 13 constituencies, including two constituencies in Bengaluru (Rajajinagar and Rajarajeshwarinagar), two in Kalaburagi (Kalaburagi and Kalaburagi Rural), and one each in Mysuru, Tumakuru, Ballari, Dharward, Raichur, Vijayapura, Yadgir, Vijayanagara, and Davangere districts.

Gold, silver items worth ₹6.44 crore seized

The Chikkamagaluru police seized gold and silver items worth over ₹6.44 crore at M.C. Halli in Tarikere taluk on Friday. Superintendent of Police, Chikkamagaluru, Uma Prashanth told presspersons that the ornaments did not have proper documents. A case has been booked.

BSY makes it clear that Vijayendra won't contest from Varuna

My son's electoral battle will be from Shikaripur and there is no question of him fighting the polls from Varuna, clarifies the former Chief Minister

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Amidst intense speculations that his son B.Y. Vijayendra will be fielded against former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Varuna constituency, former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa categorically stated on Friday that Mr. Vijayendra will fight the ensuing polls from Shikaripur, a constituency currently represented by him.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Mr. Yediyurappa said there is "no question" of Mr. Vijayendra contesting from Varuna. "Of course, there may be pressure on him to contest from there but his electoral battle will be from Shikaripur," he clarified. "I will convey to him (Mr. Vijayendra) and also the party high command my opinion on Varuna," he said.

The senior BJP leader's statement has come as a surprise to party workers in Varuna since it was widely speculated that the party's Central leadership was contemplating fielding Mr. Vijayendra from Varuna instead of Shikaripur.

Former Chief Minister Yediyurappa speaking to the media before leaving for Mysuru on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr. Siddaramaiah is contesting from Varuna, though he wished to contest from Kolar, leaving the seat to his son Dr. Yathindra Siddaramaiah who won from here in 2018.

Mr. Vijayendra, who was in Mysuru on Friday, told reporters that the party high command and the Central leadership will take a call on the candidate for Varuna and expressed confidence that the BJP will romp home in Varuna this time any which way.

'Still collecting opinion'

"No decision has been taken on the candidates for 224 seats, including Varuna. The Central leaders will decide on it as they have been collecting opinions on the candidates. The party will decide on the seat from which I have to contest. I have been touring Shikaripur and meeting people. Of course, there are BJP workers who admire me and want me to contest from Varuna," said Mr. Vijayendra, who did not contest in 2018 polls despite campaigning in Varuna.

Mr. Vijayendra did not give a direct reply when asked whether he would contest from Varuna and Shikaripur. "I cannot say anything before the party makes a decision. I haven't even got ticket as yet."

He, however, said the BJP has emerged stronger in Varuna and the party workers are enthusiastic.

Multiple aspirants in seats held by BJP pose a headache

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/SHIVAMOGGA/KALABURAGI

In at least over 15 constituencies presently held by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), there is a demand from party workers to deny ticket to incumbent MLAs as more aspirants have cropped up, becoming a headache for the party.

This comes in the backdrop of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa's statement that four to six incumbent party MLAs will not get ticket this time.

'No Gujarat model'

"The party has conducted multiple surveys based on which they may change candidates in a few constituencies. But definitely the Gujarat model of denying ticket to a large number of incumbents will not be followed here," said N. Ravikumar, general secretary, BJP Karnataka.

Rajya Sabha MP Lahar Singh Siroya had earlier said that "Gujarat model" should be followed and seniors should make way for youngsters in the State, party sources said.

Vocal demands

However, vocal demands have created factionalism in many constituencies, a senior leader lamented.

For instance, Mr. Yediyurappa had to face the protests of BJP workers in Mudigere who demanded that the incumbent MLA M.P. Kumaraswamy should not be given ticket.

> The party has conducted multiple surveys based on which it may change candidates in a few constituencies. But, the Gujarat model of denying ticket to a large number of incumbents will not be followed here.
>
> **N. RAVIKUMAR**
> General secretary, BJP Karnataka

In Mr. Yediyurappa's own home district Shivamogga, groups of party workers are demanding three incumbent MLAs K.S. Eshwarappa from Shivamogga city, Kumar Bangarappa from Sorab, and Haratalu Halappa from Sagar be denied ticket.

Karnataka Votes 2023

Mr. Bangarappa and Mr. Halappa, lateral entrants into the party, have been accused of "neglecting original party workers". Workers have even floated NaMo Vedike in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Sorab and demanded ticket for an "original" party worker.

BJP MLC Ayanur Manjunath, lobbying hard for Shivamogga city ticket, has been openly targeting Mr. Eshwarappa through posters.

The party is facing a similar situation in Byadagi, Gangavathi, Basavakalyan, Kalaburagi rural, Athani, and Rajajinagar seats, sources in the party said. Ambaraya Ashtagi, aspirant from Kalaburagi rural seat, speaking to *The Hindu*, made a strong pitch for himself arguing the incumbent MLA Basawaraj Mattimud was an "outsider" and he had a better chance at winning in the constituency.

In defectors' constituencies

Interestingly, except in Athani where Laxman Savadi is demanding ticket instead of Mahesh Kumuthahalli, there seems to be no demand from party workers in most of the 17 constituencies where defectors joined the party in 2019.

"In most of these seats, our party had never been strong, so effectively we have added these seats to our kitty. In constituencies like Hirekerur, our candidate from last time U.B. Banakar has joined the Congress. In seats like K.R. Puram and R.R. Nagar, where there are strong candidates, a truce seems to have been achieved between the MLA and other aspirants," a senior party leader said.

EC declares 48-hour alcohol-free period

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Election Commission has declared dry days in the 48-hour period ending with the hours fixed for conclusion of the forthcoming Assembly elections in Karnataka on May 10.

"Under Section 135C of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which provides that no spirituous, fermented, or intoxicating liquors or other substances of like nature shall be sold, given, or distributed at a hotel, eating house, tavern, shop or any other place, public or private, within a polling area during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of poll for any election in the polling area," stated a circular from the Election Commission of India.

"In view of the above, "dry days should be declared and notified under the relevant State laws during 48 hours, ending with the hours fixed for conclusion of poll. This will include the dates of repoll, if any. Besides, the counting day should also be declared as a dry day," stated the circular.

Following this, liquor shops, hotels, restaurants, clubs, and other establishments selling/serving liquor will not be permitted to sell/serve liquor to anyone on these days. Non-proprietary clubs, star hotels, restaurants, and hotels run by anyone even if they are issued different categories of licenses for possession and supply of liquor will also not be permitted to serve liquor on these days.

"Besides, storage of liquor by individuals should be curtailed during this period and the restrictions provided in the excise law on the storage of liquor on unlicensed premises should be vigorously enforced," the circular added.

Congress seeks transfer of four officials from office of Chief Electoral Officer

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Opposition Congress on Friday demanded that the Election Commission of India (EC) transfer four officials who have been working for more than three years in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Bengaluru.

It also demanded that all the tenders and bids of various departments of Karnataka and also of the Union government that concern the State of Karnataka be stopped in the interest of free and fair elections.

For over three years

In a petition submitted to the EC through the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar and Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah claimed that officers Raghavendra, Jnanesh, Pranesh, and Yogesh have been working in the office of CEO in Bengaluru since nine years, six years, five years, and over three years, respectively.

"These officers are lenient towards the ruling BJP and RSS organisations. Their prejudicial actions amongst others affect free and fair elections and only help to serve the prospectus of the candidates of the BJP," they said, adding that this was evident from the actions of these officers that the revision of electoral rolls was entrusted to the organisation called 'Chilume', which was run by some leaders of BJP and RSS.

The party urged the EC to transfer the four officials to their parent departments immediately.

'Stall tenders'

Mr. Shivakumar, in another petition to the EC, demanded stalling of all tender works worth ₹16,516 crore in Karnataka. They demanded that tender works of ₹1976 crore for repair of Shiradi Ghat that connects Bengaluru and Mangaluru be stalled.

He alleged that most of the departments have called the following tenders with an intention to collect "40% commission" from successful bidders and use the same money for the elections.

Poll preparedness

RTO officials impounding a government vehicle being used for election duty, at K.R. Circle near the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Friday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Flying squad inspects Bommai's car

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's car was inspected by the flying squad of the Election Commission on Friday. Mr. Bommai was heading to Ghati Subramanya temple in a private car, as he had surrendered his official car on the day the election schedule was announced. The Model Code of Conduct is in force in the State, which goes to polls on May 10, and this was part of routine check. A video showing officials checking the vehicle went viral on social media.

24,000 BJP workers vote suggesting candidates in all 224 constituencies

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The BJP, for the first time, organised a polling of its prominent workers and office-bearers in each of the 224 Assembly constituencies to crowdsource names of winnable candidates.

Nearly 24,000 party workers voted and were allowed to suggest up to three possible candidates in the ballot paper.

Ballot paper

"The ballot papers from across the State will be collected in Bengaluru, its results tabulated constituency wise, and submitted to the core committee of the State unit, which will recommend a list of names to the Central Election Committee that will finalise the list of candidates," said N. Ravikumar, general secretary, BJP Karnataka. Speaking in Ballari, BJP State president Nalin Kumar Kateel said the party leadership would complete the process of selection of candidates based on inputs by workers.

From each constituency, all incumbent and former people's representatives of all levels of government, office-bearers of the party machinery, president, and secretaries of shakti kendras, members of core committees at the mandal level, which add up to 80-120 people per Assembly constituency voted on Friday.

One of the inputs

However, party sources said that this will be just one of the inputs for selection of the candidates and not the only criteria. "The party has conducted multiple surveys in every constituency and this can also be treated like another survey," a senior leader said.

Muslim Jagruti Vedike demands restoration of quota to community

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Condemning the BJP-led Karnataka government's order scrapping the 4% reservation given to the Muslim community in Karnataka, members of the Muslim Janangada Jagruti Vedike on Friday demanded restoration of the reservation in the 2B category.

Addressing presspersons, C.S. Dwarakanath, former chairman of the Backward Classes Commission and legal advisor for the vedike, asserted that Muslims cannot be removed from the OBC list without the Backward Classes Commission's report. "No empirical data or scientific study was done before scrapping the 2B reservation for Muslims," he said.

"In Karnataka, Muslims have not been recognised as religious minorities. Reports of various Commissions, including the L.G. Havanur Commission, have recognised them as socially and educationally backward and not economically backward. Hence, they cannot be put in the EWS category, which is exclusively for economically weaker sections," he said.

Vedike president Gulshad Ahmed B.Z. said the government move was an attempt to polarise votes ahead of polls. "If the government does not restore 2B quota for Muslims, we will be forced to take the legal recourse," he added.

Rahul's rally in Kolar postponed to April 9

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A public rally of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Kolar, which was scheduled on April 5, has been postponed to April 9.

According to party sources, Mr. Gandhi postponed the rally owing to some other programme on that day.

Mr. Gandhi, a former MP, was scheduled to address the mega rally of the Congress on April 5 in Kolar, the place where he made the controversial speech in 2019 on "Modi surname" that led to a defamation case and his subsequent disqualification. The Congress has decided to hold the event at the same venue in Kolar.

Senior Congress leaders, including KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah, AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, and former KPCC chief G. Parameshwara, held a meeting at the party office here and discussed the preparations for the rally.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi speaking at the rally in Kolar in April 2019.

Two legislators resign; likely to switch parties

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The BJP, which claimed that none of its legislators would desert the party ahead of polls, saw its Kudligi legislator N.Y. Gopalakrishna submit his resignation to Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri on Friday. JD(S) legislator from Arkalgud in Hassan district A.T. Ramaswamy also resigned.

While Mr. Gopalakrishna, a five-time legislator, submitted his resignation to the Speaker at Sirsi in Uttara Kannada district, three-time legislator Mr. Ramaswamy submitted his resignation to Legislative Assembly secretary M.K. Mahalakashmi in Bengaluru. Mr. Gopalakrishna represented Molakalmuru in Chitradurga district four times earlier on Congress ticket. He had shifted to BJP in 2018 over denial of ticket and won from Kudligi in Vijayanagar district.

Mr. Ramaswamy, who has distanced himself from the leadership, told reporters here that he is still in JD (S), but the party had distanced itself. The JD(S) has already announced A. Manju, former Minister, as its candidate from Arkalgud constituency.

Earlier this week, JD(S) legislator S.R. Srinivas, representing Gubbi, resigned from his House membership and joined the Congress. He said he had worked with honesty and thanked the JD(S) leadership for giving him opportunities to serve the people. Those aware of his moves indicated that he is headed to the BJP.

Government of Kerala
Information Public Relations Department

VAIKOM SATHYAGRAHA

THE HISTORIC STRUGGLE AGAINST UNTOUCHABILITY

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Inauguration

Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan
Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala

Sri. M.K. Stalin
Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

01 APRIL 2023 | 4.30 P.M. | VAIKOM, KERALA

Centenary logo release **Sri. M.K.Stalin**
Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

Vaikom Sathyagraha Handbook Release **Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan**
Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala

FLORAL TRIBUTE

PERIYAR SMARAKAM

Sri. M.K. Stalin Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and **Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan** Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala

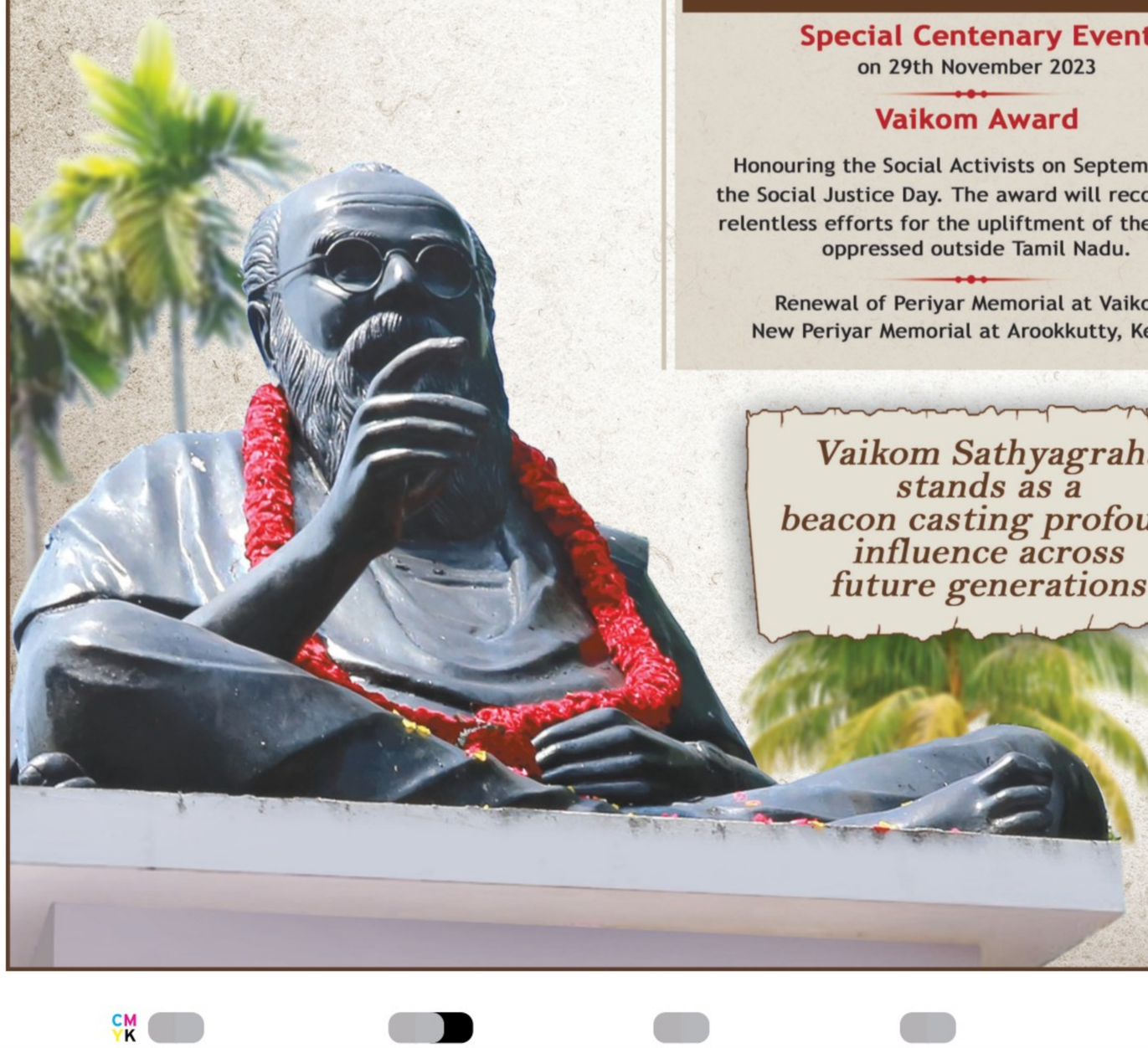
TAMIL NADU JOINS THE CELEBRATION OF THE HISTORIC EVENT

Special Centenary Event
on 29th November 2023

Vaikom Award

Honouring the Social Activists on September 17, the Social Justice Day. The award will recognise the relentless efforts for the upliftment of the socially oppressed outside Tamil Nadu.

Renewal of Periyar Memorial at Vaikom.
New Periyar Memorial at Arookkutty, Kerala.



Vaikom Sathyagraha stands as a beacon casting profound influence across future generations

കൈകൾ കോർത്ത് കരുത്തോടെ 2nd പിണറായി സർക്കാർ വാർഷികം

എന്റെ കേരളം എന്റെ അഭിമാനം

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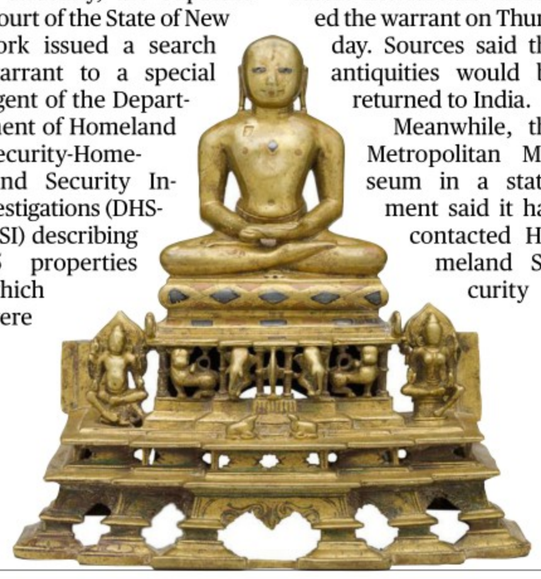
Famed U.S. museum to repatriate 15 stolen Indian artefacts

R. Sivaraman
CHENNAI

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is returning 15 antiquities to the Government of India after having learned that these were "illegally removed" from India.

All the sculptures were sold at one point by Subhash Kapoor, a dealer currently lodged at Central Prison, Tiruchi. Mr. Kapoor was arrested in Germany in 2012 and handed over to the Idol Wing CID of Tamil Nadu Police. Last November, he was convicted and handed a 10-year imprisonment for the offences of burglary and illegal export of 19 antique idols estimated at ₹94 crore from a temple in Ariyalur to the Art of the Past Gallery, New York, a few years ago.

Museums and art galleries across the world have been handing over artworks sold by him to Indian authorities. In 2019, Mr. Kapoor, who is an U.S. citizen, was charged by prosecutors in Manhattan, U.S. with stealing and possessing artefacts worth millions of dollars over a period of 30 years.



Svetambara-enthroned Jina, with attendants Yaksha and Yakshi. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Recently, the Supreme Court of the State of New York issued a search warrant to a special agent of the Department of Homeland Security-Homeland Security Investigations (DHS-HSI) describing 15 properties which were cited as stolen and constitute evidence in criminal cases. The officials executed the warrant on Thursday. Sources said the antiquities would be returned to India.

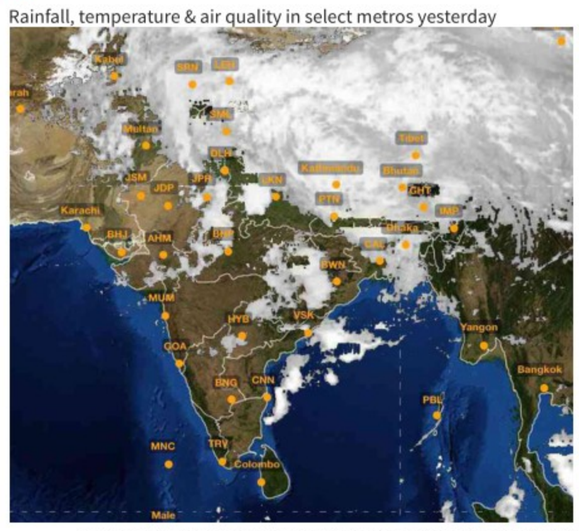
Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Museum in a statement said it had contacted Homeland Security "about works from Kapoor in 2015 and is acting on this matter" as a result of the criminal investigation by the Manhattan District Attorney's office. The sculptures date back from the 1st century BCE to the 11th century CE, and include terracotta, copper, and stone works. Among the antiquities is an enthralling sandstone sculpture of Apsara, the celestial dancer. The 33.5-inch tall sculpture from Madhya Pradesh dates back to the mid-11th century CE and is worth $10,00,000 (around ₹82 crore).

A 1st-century BCE ceramic pot from Chandraketugarh (archaeological site near Kolkata), a stone bust of Kamadeva, the God of Love, from the second half of the 8th century CE, and a Svetambara-enthroned Jina, with attendant Yaksha and Yakshi, belonging to the 11th century CE, are also part of the antiquities.

"Today's forfeiture is proof that despite Mr. Kapoor's indictments in India and America, there are still hundreds, if not thousands, of antique objects sold by him with prestigious collections worldwide," said S. Vijay Kumar, art enthusiast and Co-Founder, India Pride Project.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty wind likely at isolated places over Chandigarh, Delhi, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, south Interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	31.1	18.4	Kozhikode	—	35.5	27.4
Ahmedabad	3	34.5	21.3	Kurnool	—	39.1	27.4
Aizawl	26	31.2	13.0	Lucknow	7	30.0	18.9
Allahabad	—	32.0	23.6	Madurai	—	38.4	24.9
Bengaluru	—	35.0	22.4	Mangaluru	—	33.4	23.0
Bhopal	—	—	19.6	Mumbai	—	31.8	24.5
Bhubaneswar	—	33.0	23.0	Mysuru	3	35.8	21.4
Chandigarh	11	19.0	16.9	New Delhi	16	28.5	16.8
Chennai	—	35.3	25.2	Patna	—	29.1	20.3
Coimbatore	0.8	36.3	23.4	Port Blair	—	33.0	25.5
Dehradun	17	18.3	15.6	Puducherry	—	34.6	24.1
Gangtok	0.5	15.7	11.3	Pune	—	33.5	20.6
Goa	—	32.2	22.0	Raipur	5.8	37.8	20.0
Guwahati	—	31.0	19.8	Ranchi	5	30.0	19.0
Hubballi	—	36.0	18.0	Shillong	—	21.0	12.0
Hyderabad	—	36.2	25.0	Shimla	9	8.6	7.2
Imphal	2	28.5	16.9	Srinagar	—	18.0	7.9
Jaipur	8.4	26.6	17.4	Thiruvananthapuram	—	36.6	25.9
Kochi	—	32.2	25.6	Tiruchi	—	38.1	25.0
Kohima	1	16.0	11.9	Vijayawada	—	36.2	25.2
Kolkata	2	29.4	23.2	Visakhapatnam	—	32.0	25.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.11	.17	.24	120	124	
Bengaluru	.6	.36	.34	67	80	
Chennai	.6	.56	105	—	91	
Delhi	.20	.66	121	78	66	
Hyderabad	.24	.6	.61	81	123	
Kolkata	.14	.17	.24	55	65	
Lucknow	.24	.28	.64	198	139	
Mumbai	.4	115	.93	199	154	
Pune	119	174	112	68	60	
Visakhapatnam	.16	.40	.25	38	80	

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Chhapra, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 291 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

INBRIEF

President meets makers of *The Elephant Whisperers*

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday met the makers of the Oscar-winning documentary *The Elephant Whisperers*. It is the maiden Indian production to win in the Documentary Short Subject category at the 95th Academy Awards. "President Droupadi Murmu met the makers of Oscar winning documentary *The Elephant Whisperers*, Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga. She congratulated them on winning the award and praised them for showcasing India's tradition of conservation and living in harmony with nature," the Rashtrapati Bhavan tweeted along with pictures of the meeting. PTI

Kerala Lok Ayukta leaves CMDRF case to larger Bench

Difference of opinion between two judges leads to split verdict; complaint of nepotism had been filed against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Cabinet colleagues in the previous LDF govt.

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A difference of opinion between two judges of the Kerala Lok Ayukta has resulted in a split verdict in a nepotism complaint against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Cabinet colleagues in the previous Left Democratic Front government. The Lok Ayukta, therefore, referred the matter to a larger Bench on Friday.

The Lok Ayukta weighed whether it had the jurisdiction to investigate an "impugned" 2017-18 Cabinet decision to recompense the next of kin of two late political allies and a deceased personal security officer of a departed ruling party leader from the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF) meant mandatorily for mitigating the deprivation of those in dire need.

The Bench headed by Lok Ayukta Cyriac Joseph and Upa Lok Ayukta Harun-Ul-Rashid ruled that "as there is difference of opinion between us on the basic issue whether the action of respondents 2 to 18 in taking the impugned decisions as members of the Cabinet can be subjected to investigation under the provisions of the Kerala Lok Ayukta Act, 1999 and on the merits of the allegations raised by the complainant, we are constrained to place this complaint for investigation by the Lok Ayukta and both the Upa Lok Ayuktas together as required under Section 7(1) of the Kerala Lok Ayukta Act, 1999," the order said.

Pinarayi Vijayan

Hence, it constituted a full Bench comprising the Lok Ayukta and two Upa Lok Ayuktas to weigh the maintainability of the petition seeking a declaration disqualifying Mr. Vijayan and his former Cabinet colleagues from holding public office.

Sarah Thomas

Sahitya Akademi winner Sarah Thomas passes away

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Writer Sarah Thomas, who passed away here on Friday at the age of 89, was someone who let only her writing do the talking. A quiet observer of life around her, she weaved in all that she imbibed into her seventeen novels and more than hundred short stories, some of which were potent enough to stir the conscience of the oppressing classes.

As a girl growing up in a conservative household, an early passion for writing closed many doors for her, rather than opened them. She had to wait till the age of 34, to get her first work *Jeevitham Oru Nadhi* published. In later years, she would talk about how her wings were clipped earlier on, in her childhood. Yet, within those limitations, she soared high with the sheer quality of her prose and the relevance of the subjects she chose to weave her stories around.

She is best known for her 1978 novel *Narmadipudava*, about the travails of Kanakaambal, who gets married and becomes a widow as a teenager, and her struggles to overcome the stifling customs of the community. The book won her the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979.

ED provisionally attaches assets in two cases against individuals connected to Opposition leaders in Karnataka

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has provisionally attached immovable properties in two money laundering cases against two individuals, both connected to Opposition party leaders, ahead of the Assembly elections.

The ED issued a provisional attachment order on Friday, attaching two immovable properties of the former bureaucrat T.N. Chikkarayappa, worth ₹1.1 crore. Mr. Chikkarayappa, considered close to Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah, has been actively working on his behalf in Kolar and is said to be a ticket aspirant from the party in one of the constituencies in Bengaluru. "Investigation revealed that Mr. Chikkarayappa during his government service with the help of other accused persons illegally accumulated disproportionate assets to the tune of ₹5.33 crore, which is 304.93% excess than the legal source of income," the ED said in a statement.

In another case, the ED recently provisionally attached 30 immovable assets of Kharapudi Mahesh, a close associate of G. Janardhana Reddy, who has quit the BJP and started his own Kalyana Rajya Pragati Paksha.

These assets worth ₹54.18 crore are in Ballari, Vijayanagara, and Koppal districts and have been attached in a case related to illegal mining.

The ED claimed that the inquiry revealed that Mahesh and his family members transported and traded illegally mined ore worth ₹62.92 crore without valid permits or based on forged permits and collected risk money ₹40.93 crore for transportation of illegally mined ore by others.

Coop. bank case

In another case, the Special Court (PMLA) has taken cognisance of the prosecution complaint filed by the ED and issued summons to all accused persons in a money laundering case against Mohamed Asadulla and others and his company Al-Ameen Housing Development Company Ltd., in the case of bank fraud in Amanath Cooperative Bank Ltd.

"Investigation by the ED revealed that during the years 1985 to 2002, the accused persons misappropriated the funds of Amanath bank by allegedly sanctioning huge amounts of loans to non-existent and fictitious account holders, passing cheques, and overdraft accounts fraudulently and defrauding the bank and by using the said funds for their personal purpose and investing the same in immovable properties in their name and in the name of their relatives," the ED said in a statement.

The present market value of immovable assets provisionally attached in the case is ₹243.93 crore.

Karnataka HC stays externment of student to enable him to complete UG examination

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has stayed the externment of a 20-year-old student under the Karnataka Police Act, 1963, for two weeks to enable him to appear for the ongoing undergraduate examination till April 8.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum passed the order while disposing of a petition filed by Siddu, resident of Hegoor village in Bilgi taluk of Bagalkot district.

The jurisdictional Assistant Commissioner had passed an order on March 2, 2023, under Section 55 of the Karnataka Police Act, 1963, externing the petitioner from Jamakhandi to Sedam taluk on the ground that there is reasonable apprehension that the petitioner would engage in commission of offences.

FROM THE COURT

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum passed the order while disposing of a petition filed by Siddu, resident of Hegoor village in Bilgi taluk

Though the petitioner has to challenge the externment order before the competent appellate authority, the court stayed the externment order only for two weeks to enable the petitioner to appear for the remaining exams as he is pursuing B.Sc. course.

While directing the petitioner to give an undertaking before the Assistant Commissioner that he will not indulge in any activities which would attract Section 55 of the Act, the court gave him the liberty to assail the externment order before the competent appellate authority.

HAL registers highest-ever revenue of ₹26,500 cr. for 2022-23

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) has registered the highest-ever revenue from operations of around ₹26,500 crore (provisional and unaudited) for the financial year 2022-23 as against ₹24,620 crore for the previous financial year.

The company has recorded a revenue growth of 8% during the year as compared to the previous year, stated the defence PSU. "Despite the challenges of supply chain disruptions due to geopolitical situations, the company could achieve the targeted growth in the top line. This was possible with the increased thrust on indigenisation and with the available inventory," said HAL chairman and managing director C.B. Ananthakrishnan.

He further added that the order book of the company stood at around ₹82,000 crore at the end of March 2023, after liquidation of the supplies during 2022-23. "During the year, fresh contracts of around ₹26,000 crore were received, including manufacturing contracts for 70 HTT-40, 6 Do-228 aircraft, and PSLV launch vehicles. In addition, on the repair and overhaul front fresh order to the tune of ₹16,600 crore were received during the year," HAL said. The cash flow of the company has improved substantially with payments of around ₹25,000 crore received from the various defence customers during FY 2022-23, it added.

During the year, the income tax refund of ₹1,798 crore, including interest of ₹542 crore, has been received consequent to the favorable decision of the ITAT. This will clear all the old outstanding tax litigation with the Income Tax Department. The company has also paid an interim dividend of ₹40 per share during the current financial year representing 400% on the face value of ₹10 per share. The company has also paid a final dividend of ₹10 per share for the financial year 2021-22.

IISc researchers design tiny device that offers energy storage solution

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) researchers have designed a novel ultramicro supercapacitor, a tiny device capable of storing an enormous amount of electric charge.

IISc said that the ultramicro supercapacitor designed by the Department of Instrumentation and Applied Physics (IAP) apart from being small in size and more compact than existing supercapacitors can potentially be used in many devices ranging from streetlights to consumer electronics, electric cars and medical devices.

"Most of these devices are currently powered by batteries. However, over time, these batteries lose their ability to store charge and therefore have a limited shelf-life. Capacitors, on the other hand, can store electric charge for much longer, by virtue of their design. For example, a capacitor operating at 5 volts will continue to operate at the same voltage even after a decade. But unlike batteries, they cannot discharge energy constantly - to power a mobile phone, for example," said the Insitute.

Supercapacitors, on the other hand, combine the best of both batteries and capacitors - they can store as well as release large amounts of energy, and are therefore highly sought-after for next-generation electronic devices.

In the current study, published in ACS Energy Letters, the researchers fabricated their supercapacitor using Field Effect Transistors or FETs as the charge collectors, instead of the metallic electrodes that are used in existing capacitors. "Using FET as an electrode for supercapacitors is something new for tuning charge in a capacitor," said Abha Misra, Professor at IAP and corresponding author of the study.

Current capacitors typically use metal oxide-based electrodes, but they are limited by poor electron mobility. Therefore, Misra and her team decided to build hybrid FETs consisting of alternating few-atoms-thick layers of molybdenum disulphide (MoS2) and graphene - to increase electron mobility - which are then connected to gold contacts.

In the future, the researchers are planning to explore if replacing MoS2 with other materials can increase the capacitance of their supercapacitor even more. They add that their supercapacitor is fully functional and can be deployed in energy-storage devices like electric car batteries or any miniaturised system by on-chip integration.

PROPERTYPLUS
HOMES AND REAL ESTATE NEWS
thehindu.com/features/homes-and-gardens
THE HINDU

Speaking sustainability

Assocham GEM Karnataka Chapter connects with architecture colleges to host workshops for students on sustainable methodologies in construction to promote green buildings. By **Ranjani Govind**

The construction industry is noted to be the single largest source of carbon emissions with 40 per cent of the emissions being attributed to construction along with the utilities such as lighting, cooling, heating of the buildings, to mention a few. If this is to reach zero by 2050, important steps towards sustainable methodologies of construction and material-use should be in place. Assocham GEM Karnataka Chapter decided to address the issue by making a beginning with students of architecture.

GEM, a flagship initiative of Assocham, (stands for Green and Eco-friendly Movement) comes with its own indigenous green rating for buildings. In keeping with its philosophy of promoting green buildings, GEM Karnataka Chapter will be reaching out to the architecture schools in Bengaluru to host workshops for architecture students on sustainable methodologies of construction such as different roofing methods, rammed earth and stabilised mud blocks, techniques of lime plaster, and Athangudi tiles.

As part of this initiative, the first workshop was held on Athangudi tiles for the students of CMR University School of Architecture, where 32 students learnt to make the vibrant handmade tiles from Athangudi. The students were sensitised on the sustainable quotient of the heritage tiles which are not fired but sundried, the technique of making and laying them passed down generations of artisans in Athangudi, a village in Karaikudi district of Tamil Nadu.

These workshops are vital to bring in a change and reduce our carbon footprint

The students had a peek into the history of the tiles, the traditional way of making them which is preserved to date, the materials used, the mixing of the vibrant colours which itself is an art and finally the art of physically making them. The importance of reviving heritage and adopting greener methods of construction was further reiterated during the physical process of making the tiles, given that these tiles, unless revived, would soon exit and exist only in the record books.

Stressing on the need for architecture students to participate in workshops dealing with sustainable methodologies, architect Leena Kumar, Chairperson, Assocham GEM Karnataka Chapter, stated, "The experience ensures greater involvement as well as leaning towards sustainability, once they graduate. These workshops are vitally needed to bring in a change towards green buildings and reduce our carbon footprint."

Students in the process of making Athangudi tiles

The workshop was held at Artha, the Athangudi tile manufacturing unit of Sri Sri Rural Development Programme (SSRDP) on Kanakapura Road. Over the last two years, this heritage revival wing of SSRDP has worked to restore these tiles to their former glory by creating awareness about their sustainable nature.

Athangudi tiles are fully handmade, using skill and high level of experience, for, any minor errors and the deficiency in the tile is so pronounced as to make it unfit for laying. Says Harsini, tenth semester student who participated in the workshop, "The making of the tile appears so simple when the proceedings are watched but once we try to do the same, the layers of skill required in the making becomes evident, making us look with renewed respect at the work of the artisans."

The making of each tile begins with placing a glass plate and the chosen design frame over it. Bright coloured oxides are poured into the slots very carefully, ensuring the colours do not spill into the nearby slots. "The pouring of the colours too is an art and requires skill, we noticed on trying it ourselves. And so does the sprinkling of the first layer of dry cement and sand mixture over it", pointed out Chetan, faculty, CMRU School of Architecture.

The colourful oxides of red, yellow, blue, green along with white add to the rich vibrancy of the tiles, which when laid in an interior can totally transform the language of a space. "The colours have to be rubbed smoothly and continuously to remove lumps and then sieved. The longer and better the colours are mixed, the stronger and more vibrant the hues are. Even the mixing is not as simple as it seems,"commented Abdul, a sixth semester student.

The laying process

Once the tile is made, it is left to dry and then soaked in water for three to four days, post which it is dried in shade for a week to ten days before being ready for use. Just as the making of the tile calls for skill, the laying of the finished tiles too is an art, requiring experienced hands. The process of laying begins with a spread of wet cement and mud mixture over which a thick layer of cement milk is evenly poured. This forms the bed on which the tiles are laid.

Twenty-four hours after the tiles set, they are washed with plain water and a fresh layer of cement milk is poured to seal the gaps between the tiles. This is followed by a layer of dry cement and colour, all of which is then wiped clean to reveal neatly finished layer of tiles. The final procedure involves sprinkling of rice husk over the tiles and left to stay for a week. The husk is then swept clean followed by wet mopping of the floor to reveal sheer vibrant art.

Reviving heritage

The Indian Institute of Interior Designers, Bengaluru Regional Chapter (IIID BRC), has initiated a connect with arts revival unit Madhurya in South Bengaluru (working to revive traditional arts, crafts and weaves) and the Sri Sri Rural Development Programme (SSRDP) involved in the making of hand-made tiles.

IIID BRC, along with a team of 30 architects of Bengaluru, will be visiting the Rural Development Programme Centre on April 1 to explore ways of collaborating and reviving the country's fast disappearing construction methodologies to address the crucial issue of low skill base in the industry.

Architect Kavita Sastry, Chairperson, IIID BRC, stated, "The current level of skilled workers in the construction industry does not match the burgeoning requirement, causing concern as it directly impacts the quality of construction."

The architects will visit the Athangudi tiles manufacturing unit.

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THE HINDU
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Debatable indictment

Donald Trump's indictment will politically polarise Americans further

In a dramatic, but not unexpected, turn of events, former U.S. President Donald Trump has been indicted by a grand jury in New York in the case of hush-money paid to adult film actor Stormy Daniels in 2016, before the presidential election of that year. While the indictment, the first one ever against a former U.S. President, remains under seal and the specific charges and the extent of evidence remain unclear still, media reports and comments by Mr. Trump's lawyers indicate that the charges could include the fact that Mr. Trump's erstwhile attorney Michael Cohen paid $1,30,000 to Ms. Daniels on the 45th President's behalf, apparently to stop her from going public with the story of their consensual (and earlier) extramarital encounter. Mr. Trump is said to have reimbursed the amount to Mr. Cohen after he won the election, which was then passed off as legal expenses. In this regard the charge in the indictment is expected to be a falsification of business records, but that is only a misdemeanour offence in New York, not a felony. To prosecute Mr. Trump for a felony, the onus is on Manhattan District Attorney (DA) Alvin Bragg to not only link the falsified bookkeeping to Mr. Trump directly but also to show that the business records in question were falsified to cover up an entirely different crime. Speculation is rife that the crime that will be cited for this charge will be a potential violation of campaign finance laws – yet, this is where the prosecution case appears less firm. Following Mr. Cohen's claim that he had paid Ms. Daniels at Mr. Trump's behest, there was a question of whether Mr. Trump would be liable under federal campaign finance laws, which require monies received as campaign donations to be disclosed transparently and be subject to specified legal limits. However, a federal investigation into this matter was closed in 2019, which suggests that the weight of evidence here may not have been compelling at the time.

The broader question underlying the indictment is whether Democrats are scoring a self-goal. While more serious issues that could be potential charges against Mr. Trump are on the scanner of the Justice Department, including certain dealings of the Trump Organization, his role in inciting the January 6, 2021 insurrection and withholding classified information after demitting office, the Manhattan DA's reliance on the hush-money case could end up as blowback for the Democrats, especially given the dangers that it will polarise Americans further and be seen as pure political partisanship. Mr. Trump will of course extract every ounce of political capital that he can from what he has described as "political persecution" and a "witch hunt", and that too will likely not favour Democrats in the 2024 election.

A busy season

All-format cricketers will soon have to choose one over the others

It is the season of Twenty20 and just as the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL) concluded at Mumbai, it is time for the 16th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL). With Friday night's clash between defending champion Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, the IPL's annual summer tryst is back in vogue. Launched in 2008, the IPL has become a money-spinning brand while the WPL finally found its feet with five teams. Women's cricket in India is carving a niche and it is a progressive step as not long ago this brand of sport was deemed an afterthought before the BCCI bridged the gender divide. The board initiated corrective measures including central contracts, pay parity in terms of match fees and the WPL became an essential milestone. In the pathways laid by Diana Edulji, Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami, to name a few, the current generation of women cricketers has also gained commercial heft. And when Harmanpreet Kaur's Mumbai Indians won the maiden WPL with a seven-wicket triumph over Delhi Capitals, it was a significant moment in the history of Indian women's cricket. With the Under-19 team having won the World Cup recently, the WPL's arrival should further enhance the quality within the Indian ranks.

Just as the women rest, their male counterparts are already busy with the IPL that stretches up to May 28. The 10-team championship can sap energy from the very best of players. Not surprisingly, 'workload management' has become an oft-repeated expression as the cricketers look at the immediacy of the IPL while also being aware of the World Test Championship final in England and the World Cup in India, later this year. All-format players such as Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and some bowlers have to make choices while juggling between their IPL stints and India duties. M.S. Dhoni turning out for CSK at 41, is a testament to longevity. Equally, it is revelatory of the career choices that players make these days through staggered retirements starting with Tests, then ODIs while keeping the T20 exit for the last. A Sachin Tendulkar playing top-flight cricket for 25 years will perhaps remain an exception as the present generation pick and choose their formats. The latest IPL has drafted in the 'impact player' concept wherein a team could effect a substitution, as in football, and use the star's core skills unlike the usual cricketing substitute relegated to just fielding. The stage is set and new stars will emerge in a year during which India could eventually chase glory in ICC events.

Prospects for Dravidian renewal

Narayan Lakshman

The Madras High Court effectively gave former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Edappadi K. Palaniswami a shot in the arm when it saw off, this week, an interim challenge to his control of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) issued by former Deputy Chief Minister and party coordinator O. Panneerselvam. In February, the Supreme Court of India ruled that Mr. Palaniswami would continue as the head of the AIADMK and that Mr. Panneerselvam would have to abide by the decisions made during the party's General Council meeting on July 11, 2022. It is quite likely that these rulings might turn out to be far-reaching decisions impacting the long arc of State politics.

The reason is obvious: ever since the death of former AIADMK leader Jayalalithaa, in December 2016, the party has been riven by factional infighting, the surest indicator that her autocratic style of governance failed to nurture green shoots of leadership to take over the mantle after her time. The impact of the Court's decision will be considerable because after more than six years of squabbling to capture power from the social base of the AIADMK – which also included V.K. Sasikala and her nephew T.T.V. Dhinakaran – the victor, Mr. Palaniswami, now has a clear mandate to take the party forward into the next election with a firm grip on its 'two leaves' election symbol, the support of an overwhelming majority of General Council members, and the end of Mr. Panneerselvam's challenge for control of the party following his ejection from the AIADMK.

Back to the future

Given the recent rulings, is Tamil Nadu set to return to its old model of two-party competition between the AIADMK and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)? The fact is that that old world of nearly half a century of Jayalalithaa and former DMK chief, the late M. Karunanidhi, going toe-to-toe in an escalating competition to provide the population of the State with welfare goods has faded into the haze of the new India and its altered ground realities.

Several such realities are significant in this context. First, neither polarity of the Dravidian movement has a leader that is beyond political challenge. Consider the ruling DMK, headed by M.K. Stalin, son of Karunanidhi. While it is true that he was elected President of his party unopposed, and any potential challenge from his brother M.K. Alagiri was swiftly seen off by the party cadres who coalesced behind their leader, the difference in context between Mr. Stalin and Karunanidhi matters considerably. As a five-time Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Karunanidhi is a legendary figure within the pantheon of the Dravidian movement, scripting not only the many movie screenplays and poems that he was famous for but also the political pathways chosen by the DMK, whether it was to make fierce opposition to Hindi imposition in Tamil Nadu a vector of mass mobilisation, or to act upon the imperative of expediency and align with the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party at the Centre during 1999-2004.

> Both the major parties, the DMK and the AIADMK, face the challenge of the steady but rapid rise of Hindutva politics

For Mr. Stalin, there is an unspoken pressure that rests upon his shoulders, and it stems from the fact that performance in office and the delivery of good governance through policies impacting the citizenry's daily lives, matter more than ever before. This could explain why his government, on the balance of policy priorities, has kept economic growth, investor confidence, urban infrastructure, climate change, and other such areas of day-to-day interest to the common Tamil man and woman in the foreground, while periodically reminding voters that on State autonomy concerns, including the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and Hindi imposition, the DMK would hold firm to the values enunciated by its forebears during the heyday of the Dravidian movement.

Regarding the AIADMK, there is no less pressure upon Mr. Palaniswami to redefine himself as an able administrator of his party in the aftermath of several years of internecine squabbling within the party. He certainly delivered upon the mandate to perform superlatively for the people of Tamil Nadu in the realm of public policy when he held the Chief Ministerial throne for more than four years – and that he could do so while awaiting the resolution of deleterious intra-party wrangling speaks to the clarity of his purpose and political vision, and perhaps also to the negotiation skills that he would surely have needed to forge compromises between AIADMK bosses from different regions and representing variegated social groups. Yet, for Mr. Palaniswami too, the same paradigm shift in voter demands and public discourse, which has led to expectations that the Stalin government will deliver economic prosperity and social justice, will shape what he can and must do as leader of the Opposition in the State, and then as a campaigner in the 2024 Lok Sabha election and the 2026 State Assembly elections.

Saffron's southern spread

Nevertheless, the greatest challenge to both major parties has come from beyond the safe shores of the Dravidian movement, in the form of the steady but rapid rise of Hindutva politics across the country. In this context it is important to not overstate the impact that the BJP has had in Tamil Nadu. Yes, having four seats in the State Assembly is better than having no seats at all, as was the case for the BJP until the 2021 elections, but more important than the number of seats are voter attitudes towards the core values enshrined in the Hindutva ethos, and the history of their clash with the Dravidianist worldview.

On the essential question of religion in politics or religiosity as a way of life, few would deny the great distance between the BJP and the DMK. The same is true of caste composition in a historical context – the BJP's control of government in the Centre and the States is quintessentially the perpetuation of upper caste power in many cases.

Culturally, the BJP's policies point towards an aggressive, pan-India, homogenising intent based on specific Hindutva idioms, and these include the domination of Hindi over regional languages and English, the subordinate social position of women and some minorities, and jingoistic nationalism that is, in its idealised format, hostile towards other cultures.

Yet, the DMK and the AIADMK were built on the notion of social justice from the earliest days of the Dravidian movement under Periyar E. V. Ramasamy and C.N. Annadurai, a concept that to a great extent focused on improving the social status and rights of women. Dravidianist political mobilisation by its very definition sought to forge a social rainbow coalition of a breathtakingly broad range of middle and lower castes, a strategy that has kept either the DMK or AIADMK in power for the past 56 years.

Similarly, both Dravidian parties have historically excelled at using the power of the Tamil language to mobilise voters and bring them into the fold - including not only the language campaigns during the DMK's radical phases of anti-Brahminism in the 1960s but also former AIADMK head M.G. Ramachandran's ingenious use of Tamil cinema to foster an image of himself as a paternalistic hero-saviour of the ordinary Tamilian.

In a sense, the lines between the Dravidian parties and the BJP have been drawn ever more clearly now than they were during the preceding five years, especially with what appears to be frictions between the unified AIADMK and the BJP. Which way the politics of the State swings in the coming decades has never depended more on the core beliefs of its electorate.

narayan@thehindu.co.in

India's semiconductor mission might need a compass

Saurabh Dutta Chowdhury

is currently working at power integrations (NASDAQ: POWI), and has 30 years experience in semiconductor fabrication

The United States Department of Commerce and its Indian counterpart have recently concluded a memorandum of understanding in March 2023 to ensure that subsidies by each country do not come in the way of India's semiconductor dreams, as espoused by the much publicised semiconductor policy launched in December 2021. The U.S. Department of State has also engaged with India to beef up sector-specific export control laws in the semiconductor space – which India has agreed to, as in recent media reports.

While these seem pre-conditions in a long dance orchestrated by bureaucrats on both sides, will they lead to a global major such as Intel to invest in India in order to set up a greenfield 300mm wafer fabrication plant costing over $10 billion? The premise of this question is based on the ongoing two-year dance between Intel and Indian government ministers who were seen courting the Intel CEO at Davos, and New Delhi hoping that Intel Foundry Services (a business unit within Intel formed after Intel's takeover of the U.S.-Israel based Tower Jazz Speciality Foundry) will build a greenfield plant, most likely in Dholera, Gujarat.

The facts on the ground do not support such an eventuality in a world where Intel remains preoccupied with setting up fabs inside the U.S. So where does Indian semiconductor policy need to go from here?

The Semi-Conductor Laboratory (SCL) was set up in Mohali in 1983 by the then central government, with the vision of creating an electronics ecosystem in an era when Keltron, Uptron and Webel were fledgling entities in a pre-liberalised India aimed at consumer electronics. However, shocks, of the opening up of markets for consumer goods in 1991 and a fire that broke out in 1989 at the SCL, dashed these hopes. Some funding from the central exchequer to revive the plant to a 180 nm node pilot line to meet the strategic needs of the country did come by but the facility has, by and large, remained an unfulfilled dream in its mission of creating a domestic semiconductor ecosystem. SCL Mohali can be viewed as a technology stack similar to others such as Aadhaar, Aarogya Setu and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) acting as a force multiplier effect, encouraging many integrated circuit design startups in India to consider designing for India.

> The facts on the ground, especially in connection with the Semi-Conductor Laboratory, do not support the country's ambitious plans

The way forward

The institutional framework for such a shift in focus already exists with the transfer of SCL back to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITy) after a 15-year stint as a laboratory within the Department of Space, as part of the new semiconductor policy announcement in December 2021. However, a year into such an announcement, no joint venture partner has been found, keeping SCL employees in limbo. During this period, the focus at MeITY seems aimed at attracting Intel into India to set up a fab. This can be inferred from the wording of the request for proposals and signalling from MeITY Ministers. However, Intel primarily operates at <22nm node and 300mm, requiring over $10 billion in upgrade cost to the SCL.

An alternate approach could be to leverage human and capital assets at the SCL to build on what exists in a targeted manner, to jumpstart the semiconductor mission by taking advantage of recent technological breakthroughs in a class of semiconductors that do not need advanced lithography equipment. The "More than Moore" segment of >180 nm node involving mixed signal analog (BCD and SiGe), wide bandgap (GaN, GaAs, Silicon Carbide) for RF and power markets leveraging existing lithography capability already in place at the SCL. In this scenario, an investment of $50-$100 million may result in the development of Indian solutions for automotive electronics (EV traction inverters/on board chargers), PV-Inverters, 5G infra-power amplifiers, railway electronics (traction inverters), creating the Indian equivalent of Bosch, Siemens, ABB, Mitsubishi Electric, Thales and ELTA.

However, the upgrade has to be backed by subsidies aimed at fabless design houses with proven design (sales of >$100 million per year) willing to fabricate at the SCL in the 180nm+ node (and possibly transfer process intellectual patents if they have any). The subsidies have to be aimed at global design companies with products aimed at India-specific markets such as motor drives for BLDC fans or e-bike chargers. Unfortunately, the existing DLI/PLI schemes provide no such incentives to proven global fabless design companies.

The recent efforts by the India Semiconductor Mission to open up subsidies to global small and medium-sized enterprises in the upstream supply chain are welcome because an existing facility like the SCL will benefit from this. But this is not enough in itself unless coupled with the incentives defined above and also upgrades targeted at different sets of players.

The stakes are high as a lack of clarity and inaction may lead to India completely missing out on the semiconductor fabrication bus, yet again, unless there is course correction on incentive targets. Finally, to execute this vision in the next five years, the SCL needs a full-time director with prior "More than Moore" foundry experience than have a career scientist from the Department of Space, as is the case now. This is because there is a multifaceted market that needs to be served.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No to *dahi*

The leaders of certain States taking offence to the printing of the word *dahi* on dairy products on the premise that it shall promote Hindi is ridiculous and is the height of insecurity (Inside pages, "Will not print *dahi* on Aavin curd packets: Tamil Nadu", March 30)". All States are gradually evolving a cosmopolitan outlook and generic names of products that originate in one particular State are becoming accepted. In the same breath, southern-made films are a big draw in the northern States. Does this amount to sacrificing Hindi at the altar of other languages?

Deepak Singhal,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Court on hate speech

Hate speech is fast becoming a routine feature of public life in India. The rise of the right wing has increased the insecurities of the minorities (Inside pages, "SC slams 'silence of state' on 'vicious circle' of hate against minorities", March 30). The dissemination of hate is threatening to change the liberal secular polity. Bigots seem to adopt their own rules with only one end game.

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

NExT and format confusion

Medical students confront another problem — the conduct of the National Exit Test (NExT) that is required for admission to post-graduate medical programmes and to obtain a licence to practise medicine in India. It could be held next year, in January 2024. With nine months left, medical students face uncertainty. Authorities in many colleges seem unsure of the examination format — whether it is 'MCQ' or multiple choice questions, and valuation by 'OMR', or optical mark recognition. Students are just not ready and the authorities need to act quickly to clear the air. The draft regulations for NExT are supposed to have been released by the National Medical Commission, but many are confused.

R. Ilango,
Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu

Corrections & Clarifications

The headline of a story on adult literacy programme (March 31, 2023) needs to be changed to "Back to school: 22.7 lakh adults sit for literacy and numeracy skills exams this year". Part of the opening paragraph should be recast to say: "... these are among the 22.7 lakh unlikely students from 10 States and Union Territories who in a bid to be called 'literate,' appeared for the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test for 2022-23. More than 40% of the aspirant candidates were from Madhya Pradesh alone.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Commuters wait to board a train at the Fort railway station during a nationwide strike in Colombo on March 15, 2023. Sri Lanka deployed armed troops as trade unions protested against the high income taxes imposed as a precondition for a crucial IMF bailout. AFP

A long and rocky road to economic recovery

The International Monetary Fund has approved a $3 billion package for Sri Lanka. When the government implements the conditions stipulated by the Fund, it is Sri Lanka's poor who will bear the brunt, reports **Meera Srinivasan** from Colombo

For Sri Lanka's ruling establishment and its backers, March 20 was a good news day. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) finally responded to the government's distress call following the collapse of the debt-ridden economy last year, by approving a $3 billion loan aimed at restoring economic stability and growth. "Sri Lanka will no longer be deemed bankrupt," President Ranil Wickremesinghe said during a special address to Parliament, projecting the deal, which he desperately coveted, as a crucial economic milestone. "We have the opportunity to uplift our motherland again." Sri Lanka would "regain recognition" in the international arena, its banks' letters of credit would be respected by international financial institutions, it would now be able to borrow low-interest loans from other international financial institutions, foreign investors' confidence in the country would be restored, new opportunities would emerge, and the foundation to build a strong new economy will be laid, he said optimistically.

Wickremesinghe's supporters rejoiced; some burst firecrackers. For them, it was not just a breakthrough in economic recovery, but also the political redemption of an accidental president. The United National Party (UNP) helmed by Wickremesinghe was virtually wiped out of Parliament in the last general election in 2020. His ascent to presidency was made possible only with support from the party of Sri Lanka's disgraced former ruling clan, the Rajapaksas, who were dramatically ousted in a citizens' uprising last year. While the diminished UNP is now represented in Parliament in a lone seat, Wickremesinghe loyalists see his credentials as a crafty, resolute, veteran politician restored in three other letters: IMF.

The IMF deal for Sri Lanka – its 17th since 1965 – entails a $3 billion loan over four years based on several conditions, including arresting corruption. An IMF governance diagnostic mission has started to assess Sri Lanka's governance and anti-corruption framework in the agency's first such exercise in Asia. The government hopes to tap more rapid credit, including from other multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. A year after defaulting on its sovereign debt, Sri Lanka is looking to borrow more to stabilise its economy.

Global scrutiny

Sri Lanka's political parties and civil society organisations are mostly united in the conviction that an IMF programme is the "only way out" of the crisis despite the agency coming under growing global scrutiny for the painful aftermath of its programmes in indebted countries. Evidence from the developing world shows that an IMF loan is no "bailout." Its "structural adjustment" programmes rarely see countries decisively exit debt traps. In fact, critics accuse the IMF of facilitating more external borrowing in already heavily indebted countries. Economists and foreign debt experts around the world have also been urging the IMF to suspend the use of surcharges, in addition to potentially high-interest rates, arguing that these punish developing countries, aggravate their financial vulnerabilities, and act as sanctions on a country for being poor.

> An outsider would think things are normal in our country. But many families are skipping meals, pawning jewellery or taking loans just for daily survival.
>
> **KOLIN PETER**
> Community worker and digital marketing professional

In Sri Lanka's case, the IMF officially stepped in as an arbiter of economic affairs in September 2022 when it reached a staff-level agreement with the government. Anticipating an IMF package, the government took a slew of measures, including a pre-emptive default on its $51 billion foreign debt, a sharp hike in banking interest rates, a decision to float the Sri Lankan rupee (it depreciated from around 200 to 360 against the U.S. dollar), revise taxation, and increase fuel prices and electricity tariffs.

But Sri Lankans did not have to wait for the austerity measures to fully kick in to experience the effects. They had been facing acute shortages of essentials, long power cuts, and staggering food inflation of over 90% for months in 2022. The year saw the Sri Lankan economy contract about 8%, and crash. Coming on the heels of job losses and a drastic fall in real incomes during the pandemic, the economic crisis pushed poor citizens into existential agony. Depending on supplies available, families carefully chose what to eat, and how much. Many others who could not afford the food items had to consider which meal to forego or, worse, which child to feed.

Regardless of the government's cheer over securing the IMF programme, almost everybody in Sri Lanka admits that it will be a painful year. But there is considerably less acknowledgement that some citizens may feel the pain much more than others. While poverty is hard to miss, inequality is convenient to ignore.

Deepening disparity

For a tourist visiting any of Colombo's upmarket restaurants or bars, the crisis would seem a dated story. Affluent residents throng these venues in their SUVs and comfortably foot big bills. Away from the music and lights, at virtually every traffic junction are men, women and children asking motorists for money – a rare sight until the crisis.

There are "many Colombos," pointed out Kolin Peter, a community worker and digital marketing professional. Peter, 29, lives in a high-rise government housing complex in Colombo, where about 3,000, mostly working class, families reside. They were all displaced from different parts of the city as part of a "beautification" drive some years ago. "An outsider would think things are normal in our country... no more protests, no more shortages. But many families are skipping meals, pawning jewellery or taking loans just for daily survival," he said. "Some children go to school just so they can have the mid-day meal. In some other homes, parents are unable to send children to school because they can't afford the transport costs anymore."

Trade union members protest against the big hikes in taxes and electricity rates, in Colombo in February 2023. REUTERS

The disparity, in Peter's view, is also geographic: "We are a small country with enviable natural resources. But every youngster outside Colombo sees a job prospect only in the capital. Why can't the government create jobs in other areas?"

For him, the real chances of recovery lie in addressing these glaring disparities and not merely in securing billions in new loans. "I don't get the euphoria around the IMF programme. At the end of the day, it is a loan for an interest, right? The IMF won't bother whether we recover meaningfully or not. What has changed for people to warrant celebrations like this? More people are starving every day and our leader is talking about holding grand Vesak (an important Buddhist festival in May) celebrations. We just don't learn."

The government's exuberant celebration of Sri Lanka's 75th year of Independence also came under attack from some. Detractors see no justification for pomp when authorities postpone local government elections citing the lack of funds, or seek urgent private funding to keep the country's critical ambulance service afloat.

On the other hand, eager to project a positive image to attract potential foreign investors and tourists, both of which are crucial now, the government frequently spotlights the indicators that signal a version of recovery - more tourists, increasing exports, vanishing queues, waning protests, and declining inflation.

Authorities unfailingly highlight "reduced" inflation, now around 50%, but the number belies the persisting economic strain on the consumer who still pays steep prices for food and other essentials, while incomes remain stagnant or have fallen. Pointing to a "rapid erosion" of purchasing power, Colombo-based independent economist Rehana Thowfeek contended that over the long term, incomes must be adjusted in line with inflation rates to maintain purchasing power. "Last year, Sri Lanka had really high inflation rates which meant the cost of living rose rapidly. Now, the inflation rate is less than last year. A lower, positive inflation rate means the prices are still rising, but at a slower rate compared to last year," she said. The inflation rate measures the year-to-year change in the general price level. "This year's price increase is on top of last year's, so cost of living is in fact still increasing," she said.

The World Food Programme found that a third of Sri Lankan families continue to be food insecure. The government and mainstream economists see austerity measures as inevitable while reviving a battered economy. However, these "austerity measures" look different depending on whether they are abstract numbers from a selective reading of macroeconomic indicators or realities of daily life and basic survival. Inflation figures, without factoring in real wages, are deceiving. The country's economy, after all, is that of its people.

The electricity tariff hikes are a case in point. Sri Lanka increased tariffs twice since the crisis escalated last year – first in August 2022 by 75% on average, and in February 2023 by 66%. "The hike came during acute fuel shortages, when families were struggling without gas, and food inflation had hit about 90%. Bills suddenly doubled or tripled, and consumers were threatened with notices of possible disconnection if they didn't pay up," said Iromi Perera, Director of Colombo Urban Lab, a think tank working on urban development policy. This coincided with the huge backlog of bills accumulated during the pandemic. "There is a misunderstanding about energy consumption in poor, working-class households," she explained. "Some think they use about 30 units, but most families in an urban settlement use between 100 and 150 units. They need fans, lights, a refrigerator. Families switched to electric rice cookers when there was no gas. The reliance on electricity grew even more after the shortages last year."

In what Perera termed the "weaponisation of the grid," authorities, such as the Urban Development Authority, have issued letters and notices threatening to cut water supply for some consumers who failed to pay their electricity bills, even though the two utilities are handled by different entities.

If it is hard enough to be poor in a booming economy, it only gets much worse in an enduring crisis, where even those minimal choices available to the poor disappear. A debilitating crisis such as this has a multi-generational impact on their health, livelihood, education, and hard-earned assets. The World Bank estimated that between 2021 and 2022, poverty doubled to 25% in Sri Lanka. During the same period, urban poverty tripled. A further increase of over two percentage points has been projected for 2023. The crisis will push more people into poverty, and those already poor into destitution.

The IMF and the government emphasise the need for "social safety nets" to protect the poor and vulnerable. However, Perera sees little promise in the new enumeration exercise undertaken by the government's Welfare Benefits Board. A questionnaire with 22 indicators will determine whether a family is poor enough to receive financial support. "This kind of targeting is cruel," Perera said. "You can own a small house, but still struggle to put a meal on the table, still drown in debt, still be unable to send your children to school because transportation costs are so high. Targeted social welfare will also cut off many people from future social security services." Perera argued that Sri Lanka must opt for universal social security instead.

Resistance and recovery

Meanwhile, the government appears to be on guard. Trade unions protesting tax hikes or moves to privatise have been labelled "disruptors" standing in the way of stability and recovery. Police habitually tear gas agitators. Ministers threaten protesting "essential services" workers with termination of employment.

Most unions are not protesting the IMF programme per se, but the specific austerity measures that they associate with increased economic hardships. Even so, Leslie Devendra, General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya (Free Workers' Union), one of the country's largest unions with nearly 80,000 members spanning the energy, electricity, mining, and civil aviation sectors, said that workers must "play their part" and not "add to the problem" during a crisis. "Going to the IMF was a very difficult decision to take, but there is no alternative to help us get out of this mess. Our union feels we must face the stark reality of economic recovery. That will mean everybody will have to make certain sacrifices," he said. These include the government's move to restructure state enterprises by privatisation, which some other unions are opposing. "Whether enterprises are run under socialism or capitalism, they have to be run according to basic economic principles. Transparency and social dialogue are very important in the reform of public enterprises."

For Sri Lankans, the months ahead will be far from easy. A messy and likely long-drawn process of debt restructuring with a diverse set of creditors awaits the government, while ordinary citizens reel under its "corrective" fiscal measures.

Scores of people are fleeing economic deprivation, looking for educational or employment opportunities elsewhere. Official estimates show that more than a million Sri Lankans left the country in 2022. "We witnessed the Aragalaya (struggle) last year. The protesters wanted Gota (then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa) to go home and made sure he did. They also wanted a system change, but are we seeing that? The same set of politicians are calling the shots," said Peter, voicing the disillusionment among the young. He worried that despite a historic people's uprising, the ruling class has returned to politics and business as usual. Meanwhile, ordinary citizens continue to bear the ever-increasing cost of the crisis. "All that our politicians care about is holding on to their power and wealth," he said.

From Page One

Govt. vows swifter nod for exporters

While the industry noted that there was precious little in the policy for services exporters, the Minister said that goods exporters need to work a bit harder to maintain their growth momentum.

"We have ensured there is no end-date to this policy to be able to update it as and when required. The approach is to move from an incentive-based regime to a remission of taxes regime," Mr. Sarangi said.

Processing time cut

"We are looking at improving the ease of doing business by digitising applications, reducing timelines for processing applications and lowering transaction costs for exporters. The application fee is being reduced for Advance Authorisation and EPCG schemes for MSMEs, which will benefit 55% to 60% of these schemes' beneficiaries," Mr. Sarangi added.

Opening up a new area of potential exports, the policy has included "merchanting trade" within its ambit. "Exporters in India can source goods from another country and send them to a third country without touching Indian shores. This will also enable exports of restricted goods," Mr. Sarangi noted. "There is a focus on simplifying policies to facilitate export of dual-use high-end goods and technology such as UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), cryogenic tanks and certain chemicals," he said.

One-year amnesty

"We are also coming up with an attractive amnesty scheme for exporters that have not been able to fulfil their obligations under the EPCG and Advance Authorisation schemes," the DGFT added.

These two schemes will continue with process tweaks, including a reduction in export obligations for some items pertaining to green energy development.

"One of the most litigated issues, pertaining to non-fulfilment of export obligations under the Advance Authorisation and EPCG schemes, can now be settled under the new amnesty scheme," noted Shashi Mathews, partner at IndusLaw. However, the actual quantum of benefit under the scheme will only become clear later.

Among its export promotion initiatives, the Commerce Ministry has included the push to drive international trade settlement in the Indian rupee (INR), granting benefits to those exports that are paid for via the rupee.

Trump indicted; likely to surrender next week

A spokesperson for the Manhattan District Attorney's office said prosecutors had reached out to Mr. Trump's defence team to coordinate a surrender. Mr. Tacopina said Mr. Trump is "likely" to turn himself in on Tuesday. "We're working out those logistics right now," Mr. Tacopina said on NBC's *Today* show. He insisted that Mr. Trump would not take a plea deal: "There's no crime."

Mr. Trump was asked to surrender on Friday but his lawyers said the Secret Service needed additional time as they made security preparations, two people familiar with the matter told *The Associated Press*.

The case centres on well-chronicled allegations from a period in 2016 when Mr. Trump's celebrity past collided with his political ambitions. Prosecutors for months scrutinised money paid to porn actor Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal, whom he feared would go public with claims that they had extramarital sexual encounters with him.

HC sets aside CIC order seeking info on Modi's M.A. degree, fines Kejriwal

High Court issues order on a petition moved by the Gujarat University; the varsity had challenged a 2016 direction of Central Information Commission asking it to provide the details to the Delhi CM; penalty of ₹25,000 imposed

Mahesh Langa
AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court has set aside a 2016 order of the Central Information Commission (CIC) directing the Gujarat University (GU) to provide the details of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's M.A. degree to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Justice Biren Vaishnav of Gujarat HC allowed a petition moved by GU that had challenged the direction of CIC asking the varsity to furnish the details of Mr. Modi's Master of Arts (M.A.) degree under Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The court on Friday also imposed a fine of ₹25,000 on Mr. Kejriwal, who was a party respondent in the case. Moreover, the court also declined to stay its order, dismissing a request in this regard by the lawyer appearing for the Delhi CM.

On February 9, the High Court had concluded hearings in the matter.

> Doesn't the country even have the right to know how educated their PM is? He vehemently opposed showing the degree in court. Why?
>
> **ARVIND KEJRIWAL**
> Delhi Chief Minister

AAP's reply

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said it would appeal against the order in a Division Bench. "With this judgment, citizens have lost their right to seek information about the PM's degrees. The cost imposed on Mr. Kejriwal, who was a respondent in this case, also came as a surprise for us. Since we are not satisfied with this judgment, we will soon approach a Division Bench against this order," said AAP Gujarat's legal cell president Pranav Thakkar.

Mr. Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi reacting to the High Court's order. "Doesn't the country even have the right to know how educated their PM is? He vehemently opposed showing the degree in court. Why? And those who demand to see the degree will be fined? What is happening? Illiterate or less educated PM is very dangerous for the country," he said.

Reacting to Mr. Kejriwal's comments, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said, "What Kejriwal is doing reflects his frustration. He is naturally frustrated as his government Ministers are in jail on charges of corruption and being involved in a liquor scam. His comments are a consequence of this."

'Violates privacy'

On February 9, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the university had contended that no student's degree can be disclosed under the RTI Act as it violates the privacy of the individual.

Mr. Mehta submitted that information about the PM's degrees is "already in the public domain" and the university had also placed the details on its website in the past, and claimed the 2005 Act is being used for settling scores and to make "childish jabs" for political purposes.

Citing some past judgments of the Supreme Court and by other HCs about the exemptions granted under Section 8 of the RTI Act, Mr. Mehta said one cannot seek someone's personal information "just because you are curious about it".

"One can seek information if it falls in the category of larger public interest. But, you cannot seek private information not related to my public activity. Just because the public is interested in it, it cannot become public interest. Courts' interpretation has established that educational qualification is personal information, whether it is of a politician or any other person," he contended before Justice Vaishnav.

Responding to Mr. Mehta, senior advocate Percy Kavina, for Mr. Kejriwal, told the court that information about the PM's degrees was not available in public domain as claimed by the Solicitor General. In his submission, he asked what prompted the university to challenge the order of the CIC. According to him, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) should have challenged the order if it was aggrieved.

(With PTI inputs)

Poll bonds on sale for 10 days starting from April 3

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The government on Friday announced the 26th tranche of electoral bond sales to be undertaken over a ten-day window starting April 3 and closing on April 12, at all authorised branches of the State Bank of India.

While the move comes ahead of the Karnataka Assembly elections, a ten-day sale window in April is part of the stated schedule of sale of such bonds. As per the original scheme, the bonds are made available for 10 days each in January, April, July and October, on dates specified by the Centre, and an additional 30-day period in the year of the Lok Sabha elections.

Last November, the scheme was amended to grant the Centre the power to declare an extra fortnight of electoral bond sales in years when States and Union Territories with a legislature have polls. That window was used to issue bonds ahead of the Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections.

Ministry says MGNREGS workers will build almost 75% of anganwadis this year

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Almost three out of every four anganwadi centres to be constructed in the current year will be built in convergence with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the Women and Child Development Ministry has said.

The Ministry has informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Youth and Sports that the ₹12 lakh cost of construction of each anganwadi would also be split, with ₹8 lakh being provided under MGNREGS. The remaining ₹4 lakh will be paid by the Central and State governments in equal amounts.

There was a demand for 27,000 anganwadi centres in the country in the current year, out of which 20,000 are to be constructed under MGNREGS, the Ministry said. The government has also identified 40,000 anganwadi centres for upgradation in aspirational districts across the country this year.

The Ministry said that of the ₹12 lakh cost of construction of each anganwadi, ₹8 lakh will be provided under MGNREGS. FILE PHOTO

The Centre has also informed State governments that under the Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 schemes, it is proposed that States may seek CSR funds on their own discretion, apart from accepting donations from individuals, companies, business houses and institutions of repute for construction of anganwadis.

The Ministry also requested all States to revisit the actual requirements of anganwadi centres vis-à-vis the population of the area, the number of children actually attending, and the number of centres already available, and then furnish a detailed proposal.

Audit process to be fully digitalised from today

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), Girish Chandra Murmu, on Friday announced full activation of the One Indian Audit & Accounts Department One System (OIOS), a web-enabled IT application with support for multiple languages, offline functionality and a mobile app, for complete digitalisation of the audit process from April 1, 2023.

Mr. Murmu said henceforth all new audit work in the institution would take place only through the application and physical paper-based workflow would cease starting Saturday. "The only exception would be the Defence Audit offices which would take some more time because of security issues. From tomorrow onwards, the digitisation process would be irreversible," he said.

Rijiju recalls Emergency to mount attack on Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Taking yet another dig at the Congress after its senior leader Digvijaya Singh had tweeted to thank Germany for taking note of Rahul Gandhi's disqualification, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday said democracy was actually "murdered" during the 1975 Emergency but none went around seeking help from foreign powers.

"When Indian democracy was truly murdered in 1975 by the Congress Party, no one went around crying in foreign land to seek foreign power intervention. Indian people fought and restored democracy because democracy lives in the minds and souls of Indians," he tweeted. Mr. Rijiju had accused Mr. Gandhi of inviting foreign powers to interfere into India's internal matters.

NATO is open to stronger ties with India, says U.S. envoy

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

The MEA had last year confirmed that the two sides have maintained contact for some time

A leading U.S. official has said the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is "open" to deepening ties with India. Speaking at a virtual press briefing on Friday, Ambassador Julianne Smith, U.S. envoy to NATO, said Russia should withdraw from Ukraine and that NATO is watching China-Russia relation in the backdrop of Russia's continued military operation in Ukraine.

"NATO's door is open to more cooperation if India seeks that. NATO is more than happy to sit down anytime with India," said Ambassador Smith confirming that officials of NATO held "informal" exchanges with Indian counterparts on the sidelines of the recently held Raisina Dialogue in Delhi.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had last year confirmed that the two sides had maintained contact at various levels for some time. "India and NATO have kept in touch in Brussels at different levels for quite some time now. This is part of our contacts with various stakeholders on various issues of mutual interest," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said in last August.

Ms. Smith announced that a NATO Ministerial will be held on April 4-5 but she also confirmed that NATO hasn't invited India for the meeting. The U.S. official, however, informed that it will see participation from Japan and Australia.

As Trinamool seeks unity against BJP, Opposition in West Bengal draws closer

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

At a time when the Trinamool Congress leadership is giving a call for united Opposition against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at Centre, the Opposition parties in West Bengal have come on the same page to oppose the Trinamool government in the State.

On Thursday, when State Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee called for unity within the Opposition parties during a dharna, several leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) joined the protest of State government employees, demanding parity in DA (Dearness Allowance) with the Union government staff.

A few moments later, Leader of the Opposition and BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari was seen at the same venue. Following this, Congress spokesperson Koustav Bagchi also joined the protesting employees.

Power games: Workers of the CPI(M) protesting against the State government in Kolkata. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Amidst the Opposition parties coming on one page, Mr. Adhikari has said the parties should ensure that there should be "no vote for Trinamool Congress".

Political observer and psephologist Biswanath Chakraborty said such calls by the Opposition will give a message to voters at the ground level to vote strategically against the ruling party. "So in places where the Left is strong the Opposition will vote for Left and vice-versa, where BJP is strong Opposition votes will rally behind the BJP," he said.

INBRIEF

'Equal say in shaping new information order needed'

Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Friday said India, as the world's largest democracy, should be an equal participant in giving shape and form to the new information order in the world. Speaking at the valedictory session of 52 Indian Information Service (IIS) officials of the 2018, 2019 and 2020 batches, Mr. Thakur said: "...we are now witnessing the birthing of a post-pandemic new information order as geopolitical lines of alignment are being redrawn and geo-strategic concerns are being re-framed."

BSP may deny ticket to Atiq Ahmed's wife in local election

After the conviction of criminal-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed in the Umesh Pal kidnapping case, his wife Shaista Parveen, who was being considered for the Prayagraj Mayor post by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), is likely to lose her candidature. After the reservation status on the post of Mayor is clarified in the coming weeks, the BSP is likely to declare a new mayoral candidate. Dates for the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation elections are set to be announced in two weeks.

TIPRA Motha leaders hold 'fruitful' meet with Assam CM

The leaders of TIPRA Motha Party (TMP), the primarily tribe-based Opposition party in Tripura, held a "fruitful" meeting with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in Guwahati on Thursday. The outcome of the meeting has practically averted TMP chairman Pradyot Bikram Manikya Debbarma's threat to go on an indefinite hunger strike if the Centre did not appoint an interlocutor by March 27 for pursuing "constitutional solutions" to his demand for Greater Tipraland.

Shah to attend two BJP events on his Bihar visit tomorrow

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will visit Bihar on April 2, for the fourth time since the JD(U) snapped its ruling ties with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the State in August 2022. During his visit, Mr. Shah will address public and party meetings at Sasaram and Nawada to mark the birth anniversary of emperor Ashoka. Earlier, Mr. Shah had visited Purnia, Kishanganj in September 2022; Sitab Diara in Saran district in October last year; and Valmikinagar and Patna on February 25, 2023.

Scheme for refugees from Pakistan hits rough patch

Financial aid was announced by the Centre in 2018; Hindu and Sikh families who migrated from West Punjab after Partition say scheme is mired in corruption and officials are demanding bribe

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

A Union government scheme to provide financial assistance of ₹5.5 lakh per family to over 5,000 Hindu and Sikh families who migrated to India from Pakistan's West Punjab after the 1947 partition, has hit rough weather. The scheme sanctioned in 2018, has been extended till March 31, 2024, amid several issues, ranging from lack of documents to tepid response from families. Of the 5,764 eligible families, 70% of them are Dalits. The claims have been settled for only 903 families so far.

A senior J&K government official told *The Hindu* that several claims could not be processed, as the individuals were not able to produce original documents such as refugee cards, when they entered India from Pakistan's Sialkot in 1947. The administration conducted special camps a year ago to help the families apply for the Union government grant.

In the 2023-24 budget, ₹25 crore has been allotted for the scheme. The total outlay for the scheme after it was implemented stood at ₹317 crore.

However, Labha Ram Gandhi, president, West Pakistan Refugees Action Committee, said, "We have made several pleas before the tehsildar (revenue officials), but they do not initiate any action. Of the over 5,000 eligible families, only 900 have got the money so far."

Another resident added that the entire scheme was mired in corruption and the revenue officials were demanding bribes.

The J&K official said that in some cases, the claimants did not show enthusiasm as families had expanded in the past 75 years, and the total amount when divided among all members came out to be very low.

"In the cases where the original claimant who came to India in 1947 is still alive, the process is smooth. But when it comes to dividing the amount among several members of the family, it takes time. Many do not apply as they settled in other parts of India, and the amount is too small," the official said.

Demanding their due

The scheme for West Pakistan refugees has hit a roadblock as they claim that J&K officials are delaying the process

Long battle: Members of the PoK Refugee Front raise slogans during a protest, in Jammu. PTI

5,764: Eligible families

70%: Dalit families

903: Claims settled

₹5.5 lakh: Assistance per family

₹25 crore: Allocation in Union Budget for FY 2023-24

₹317 crore: Scheme outlay

CERT-in may be exempted from giving information under RTI Act, says Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The waiver will allow the agency to reject applications for information, even on policy matters

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in) may soon be exempt from responding to queries under the Right to Information Act, the government informed Parliament on Friday.

The Department of Personnel and Training has reviewed a proposal from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to include CERT-in in the Second Schedule to the RTI Act, which deals with exempted organisations like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Border Security Force.

Inter-departmental consultations are ongoing to examine the proposal, with the Ministry of Law and Justice participating, Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in response to Biju Janata Dal MP Amar Patnaik's questions.

The exemption would allow CERT-in to reject any application for information, even on policy related matters. This is significant as the body had issued directions in April 2022 that required Virtual Private Network (VPN) providers and cryptocurrency firms to preserve data on all users. The directions are being challenged in the Delhi High Court, and the government has argued that absolute anonymity online is not acceptable. Several major VPN providers have pulled their servers out of India, arguing that the directions would compromise users' privacy on the internet.

CERT-in coordinates with public and private organisations in India when cyber incidents like data breaches and ransomware attacks are reported. It also issues advisories for software vulnerabilities as guidance for organisations.

When deliberations on exempting CERT-in from the RTI Act were first reported last May, the Delhi-based Internet Freedom Foundation said in a statement, "On the one hand, CERT-In wants our logs [under the April 2022 Cyber Security Directions], non-compliance with which will lead to one year jail time, but on the other hand, doesn't want to be transparent to the citizens in return."

Govt. flags 'unverified' tweets on Punjab issue

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has continued its crackdown on posts on Twitter, according to public filings obtained by *The Hindu*. While some of the removed tweets and accounts contain unverified information on the situation in Punjab, where police continue to search for the pro-Khalistan preacher Amritpal Singh, the tweets flagged by the government included older posts related to anti-minority speeches made by political leaders.

@HindutvaWatchIn, a Twitter handle that says it "monitor[s] reports of attacks on members of religious minorities in India," had four videos pulled down on government orders issued on Wednesday, that was disclosed and implemented on Friday. *The Hindu* has reached out to MeitY for comments.

United States Congresswoman Ilhan Omar had on Thursday expressed concern on the "human rights situation in Punjab". Ms. Omar said the Indian government had "blocked the Twitter accounts of civic leaders, journalists including the BBC Punjab, and a Canadian Member of Parliament". *BBC News Punjabi* Twitter account was withheld in India for a few hours on Tuesday, before it was restored.

In March, Twitter disclosed at least 10 takedown requests containing several hundred accounts and tweets. In the latest batch of takedowns, the account of Gurpreet S. Sahota, the editor of the Canada-based CK News Group, was restricted.

Russia promises to deepen strategic partnership with India

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Russia on Friday described India and China as "friendly sovereign global centres of power" and vowed to give importance to comprehensive deepening of ties and enhancement of coordination with them.

Unveiling its new concept of foreign policy, approved by President Vladimir Putin, Moscow also asserted that its attitude towards other countries and multilateral bodies is contingent on the constructive, neutral or unfriendly character of their policies with respect to it.

Russia said it places special emphasis on increasing the volume of trade with India, strengthening investment and technological ties, and ensuring resistance to destructive actions of "unfriendly states and their alliances". In the document, Russia underlined that it will build on a privileged strategic partnership with India.

"A comprehensive deepening of ties and enhancement of coordination with friendly sovereign global centres of power and development and committed to approaches which coincide in principle with the Russian approaches to a future world order and solutions for key problems of the world politics, is particularly important for achieving strategic goals and objectives of the foreign policy of the Russia," the policy statement said in its sub-section on China and India.

China poses challenge to rules-based order in Indo-Pacific: German envoy

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The Indo-Pacific may be the area where the biggest challenge we have to face with China materialises, said German Ambassador to India Philipp Ackermann while stating that Indo-Pacific is growing in importance on the European agenda. Expanding on the European focus on the Indo-Pacific, he said on Friday, "India will be our preferred partner. India is a very courted country. Everybody is coming here..."

Philipp Ackermann

In this regard, he said for the first time European Union (EU) is also in the political thinking of India. Referring to the war in Ukraine, the envoy said borders are not safe any more. In Europe, sovereign states could be invaded, he said and added, "In Indo-Pacific, this kind of aggression can happen."

Speaking at a seminar on the 'India and the EU and the transiting security order in the Indo-Pacific' organised by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) in partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Mr. Ackermann said, "What we want in the Indo-Pacific is preserving the international rules-based order."

Referring to various multilateral and mini-lateral groupings in the region, he said what we are seeing is the seeding of the security framework in response to China. He further said that their experience is not to put all the eggs in one basket, referring to their dependence on Russia for gas imports which he said have now been reduced to zero. With China the business interests are 100 times more, he said while adding, "We cannot fully decouple from China."

Uttarakhand told to probe Patanjali ads

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre asked the Uttarakhand government to examine at least 53 such cases against Patanjali Ayurved. Sarbananda Sonowal, AYUSH Minister, said in the Rajya Sabha in response to a question on banning five drugs – Divya Madhugrit, Divya Eyegrit Gold, Divya Thyrogrit, Divya BPgrit and Divya Lipidom.

"In 2022, the Ministry has forwarded advertisements of Divya Madhugrit, Divya Lipidom, Divya Eyegrit Gold and Divya BPgrit to Ayurveda and Unani Services in Uttarakhand to examine the matter for withdrawal of advertisements," Mr. Sonowal stated.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, TIRUPATI
(An Autonomous Institute under Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

RECRUITMENT FOR THE POST OF "REGISTRAR"

Refer to the Advt. No.11/2023 published in this Newspaper on 25th February 2023 for recruitment to the post of Registrar in Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Tirupati. The last date for submission of online Application is extended till 17th April, 2023. However, the crucial date for ascertaining eligibility like age, experience etc. shall remain the same.

Sd/-
Extension/Advt. No.11/2023/IISER-T/Rect./25.02.2023 **Director**

Office of The Additional Chief Engineer, PHED, Region-Kota
Notice Inviting Bid

Bids for works under JJM are invited from interested bidders upto 11-04-2023 18:00 Hours. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the **http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, and http://rajwater.gov.in** departmental website detail are following:-

NIT No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Date & time for online submission of tender
28/22-23	Work of "Augmentation of various RWSS/JJY/P&T Schemes of PHED Sub Dn Shahbad to provide FHTC including one year defect liability period of SVSs under JJM in the jurisdiction of PHED Dn Baran, District Baran. **UBN No. PHE2223WLOB15021**	Rs. 1080.97 Lacs	22-03-2023 at 10:00 Hrs upto 11-04-2023 (upto 18:00 Hrs)

(Mahesh Jangid)
Additional Chief Engineer
DIPR/C/4677 **PHED, Region, Kota**

JODHPUR VIDYUT VITARAN NIGAM LIMITED
Corporate Identity Number (CIN) –U40109RJ2000SGC016483
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (RA&C), Regd. Office : New Power House, Jodhpur- 342003 Email:xenredsmjdvvnl@gmail.com seracommlju@gmail.com Websitewww.jdvvnl.com

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
(TN-DSM-04 - UBN No. JVV2223WL0B00578, TN-DSM-05 - UBN No. JVV2223WL0B00579)

E-tenders in two parts (Techno-commercial bid & Price bid) are invited from eligible bidders for design, survey, supply, installation, testing, commissioning, operation & maintenance for 25 years from COD of grid connected solar power plants through RESCO mode, its associated 33kV or, 11kV line to connect the plant with various 33/11 kV Sub-Stations and remote monitoring system (RMS) of solar power plants under KUSUM Scheme-Component C (Feeder level solarization) **in various sub-divisions of Jaisalmer Division under Jaisalmer circle (TN-DSM-04 / UBN No. JVV2223WL0B00578),** and **in various sub-divisions of Pokaran Division under Jaisalmer circle (TN-DSM-05 / UBN No. JVV2223WL0B00579).**

All the details regarding tender is available at web site **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl**, **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** and **www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** vide NIT No. JDVVNL/ SE (RA&C)/TN-DSM-04 and NIT No. JDVVNL/ SE (RA&C)/TN-DSM-05.

In future, corrigendum/extension, if any, shall be published only at web site **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl**, **http://www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** and **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**.

Raj.Samwad/C/22/17078 **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (RA&C)**
बिजली संबंधी शिकायतों के लिए टोल फ्री नम्बर 1800 180 6045

Office of the Assistant Secretary
Electricity Department
Thrissur Corporation, Thrissur
TCED/RDSS-3117/22 Dated: 31.03.2023

THRISSUR CORPORATION - ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT
E-TENDER NOTICE

Appointment of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Service Provider under RDSS. log on to :
www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

(Sd/-)
Assistant Secretary

DELHI JAL BOARD : GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER (PROJ.) WATER-II
THROUGH DY. SE./EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PROJ) W-VII
ANNEXE JAL SADAN : LAJPAT NAGAR : NEW DELHI-110024
OFFICE TELEPHONE NO. 011-29818410, E-MAIL ID : executivewater7@gmail.com

आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव

STOP CORONA :- "WEAR MASK, FOLLOW PHYSICAL DISTANCING, MAINTAIN HAND HYGIENE"

Press NIT NO. 09 (2022-23)

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement and tender ID	Last Date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Construction and commissioning of 2.2 MG & 3.7 MG UGR & BPS for Batla House & Abul Fazal at Okhla in AC-54 under EE(Proj)W-VII	Civil Works : Rs. 35,04,59,775/- E & M Works & O & M : Item Rate	75,19,000/-	31.03.2023 2023_DJB_239160_1	02.05.2023 up to 3.00 PM

The details of the tender can be seen on web-site **https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in**

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) **(K. K. HARIT)**
Advt. No. J.S.V. 589(2022-23) **DY. SE/EE (Project) W-VII**

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
PARADIP PORT-754142,Odisha (India)
ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT (Estate Wing)
AD/EST/GENL-01/2021/1010 Dt.28.03.2023

E-Tender Notice

An e-Tender notice invites bids for the work "Providing field/office assistance for Estate Works for a period of 2 (Two) years" is available in the website from 29.3.2023 to 19.04.2023. Interested bidders may log on the website:-
https://eprocure.gov.in./eprocure/app.

Sd/-
PPA/PR/239/2022-23 Sr.Asst.Estate Manager
29/3/23 Paradip Port Authority

एचएलएल लाइफकेयर लिमिटेड (भारत सरकार का उद्यम) HLL Lifecare Limited (A Government of India Enterprise)
CIN: U25193 KL 1966 GOI 002621
HLL Bhavan, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram- 695 012, Kerala India. Tel: +91 471 2354949

Expression of Interest (EOI) For Supply of Pharma, Implant and Surgical Products

HLL Lifecare Ltd., a Mini Ratna PSU under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India, invites Expression of Interest to register with HLL from Principal Manufactures / Importers / Distributors for **Supply of Pharma, Implants and Surgical Products to HLL/AMRIT outlets on Pan India / Regional basis.**
Interested parties may visit HLL portal at **https://vendorregistration.lifecarehll.com** for registration.
Vice President (Sourcing)
स्वास्थ पीढ़ियों के लिए नवाचेषण | Innovating for Healthy Generations

JODHPUR VIDYUT VITARAN NIGAM LIMITED
(MATERIAL MANAGEMENT & CONTRACT WING) NEW POWER HOUSE,
INDUSTRIAL AREA, JODHPUR-342003 PHONE: (0291) 2742223, FAX: (0291) 2746539

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

E-Procurement Tenders are invited for purchase of Non contact type AC Voltage Detector Under **TN-1867 (UBN JVV2223GSOB00604)**, Rain Coat **TN-1868 (UBN JVV2223GLOB00605)** and Safety Belt **TN-1869 (UBN JVV2223GLOB00606)**.

Details regarding Quantity, Tender cost, Earnest Money, Schedule date of tender opening for aforesaid tenders are available on our website at **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl** and also at **http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in**.

Raj.Samwad/C/22/17107 **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MM&C)**
बिजली संबंधी शिकायतों के लिए टोल फ्री नम्बर 1800 180 6045

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान, मदुरै
All India Institute of Medical Sciences
Madurai (Tamil Nadu)
Under PMSSY Division, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India
JIPMER, Puducherry - Mentor Institute

No.JIP/Admn-I/Rect.1(30)/AIIMS-MDU/2019/Vol-II **Dated: 01.04.2023**

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Madurai, an Autonomous Institute of National Importance is one of the new AIIMS and an apex healthcare Institute established by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY). JIPMER, Puducherry has been designated as the Mentor Institute for AIIMS, Madurai. Application are invited from eligible officers for filling up the following Group 'A' posts for AIIMS, Madurai on Deputation basis given as under:

No.	Name of the Post	Pay Matrix (as per 7th CPC)	Vacancy
1.	Medical Superintendent	Level-14 (₹144200-218200)	1
2.	Executive Engineer (Electrical)	Level-11 (₹67700-208700)	1

The format of the application, other details regarding pay scale, age, qualification, experience and other conditions of eligibility etc. for the posts are available on **www.jipmer.edu.in/aiims-madurai**

The last date for receipt of filled in application is **29.05.2023 (Monday) till 4.30 P.M.**

Executive Director
AIIMS, Madurai

INCOIS

INDIAN NATIONAL CENTRE FOR OCEAN INFORMATION SERVICES (INCOIS)
(an autonomous body under Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Govt. of India), Hyderabad

Applications are invited from the eligible candidates for filling up of the following **Regular Positions on Direct Recruitment** at Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad, an autonomous body under Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India :

Post Code	Name of the Post	No. of Posts & Reserved for	Pay & Allowances as per 7th CPC	Age Limit (in years) (as on date of closure of application)
01	Scientist F	One (UR)	Level - 13A of pay matrix (Rs.1,31,100-2,16,600)	50
02 & 03	Scientist D	Three (UR)	Level - 12 of pay matrix (Rs.78,800- 2,09,200)	50
04, 05 & 06	Scientist C	Four (UR)	Level - 11 of pay matrix (Rs.67,700-2,08,700)	40
07	Scientific Assistant A	One (SC)	Level - 6 of pay matrix (Rs.35,400-1,12,400)	28
08	Junior Hindi Translator	One (UR)	Level - 6 of pay matrix (Rs.35,400-1,12,400)	30

Further details about the position, eligibility, academic qualifications, responsibilities, experience, application procedure and other general conditions are available at weblink **https://incois.gov.in/jobs/index.jsp.**

The last date of submission of online application is May 01, 2023 by 05:00 pm IST.

Director, INCOIS
INCOIS/RMT/02/2023

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS,TIRUPATI
I.T. DEPARTMENT e- PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
Adv.No.01/TTD-11021(91)/1/2023-IT-TTD Dated 31-03-2023

Online open tenders are invited on e-procurement platform for the works with the following NIT Number.

NIT No.01/EDPM/TTD/TPT/2023-24

For Tender Notice visit http://www.tirumala.org. For participation in the e-tender log on to https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in or log https://www.apeprocurement.gov.in.

Roc.No.PR4/13952/Adv.No.453/PRO/2023, DT.31-03-2023 **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PWD ZONE KOTA
No.4470 **Dated 24/3/23**

NIT No.26/2022-23
Notice Inviting Bid
NIB No. PWD2223A4903

Bids for Budget Announcement Road and Bridge works year 2022-23 in PWD Zone Kota are invited from interested bidders upto 6.00 pm, 24.04.2023. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in) of the Rajasthan and http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in website. The approximate value of the procurement is Rs. 3092.48 Lacs.(3 Nos. works)
UBN No. 1. PWD2223WLOB19628 2. PWD2223WLOB19629 3. PWD2223WLOB19630

(N.S. Meena)
Addl. Chief Engineer
DIPR/C/4733 **PWD Zone Kota**

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.W.D. CIRCLE BANSWARA (RAJ.)
Address - Near Circuit House, Jaipur Road, Banswara (Raj.) 327001 E-Mail - piu_banswara@rediffmail.com
Phone - 02962-241808 sebanswara.pwd@rajasthan.gov.in
No. : D-1764 Date : 21/03/2023

Notice Inviting Bid (10/2022-23)

NIB code - PWD2223A4816

Bids for Construction of Unconnected village Road in Banswara District are invited from interested bidders from Dated 28-03-2023 9.30 am to 18-04-2023 6.00 pm. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal **(http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in)** of the state. The approximate value of the procurement in Rs. 2572.00 Lacs.
UBN - PWD2223WSOB19201 TO PWD2223WSOB19208

(Udai Singh Jarwal)
Superintending Engineer
DIPR/C/4689 **P.W.D. Circle Banswara**

KERALA STATE COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT(KSCSTE),
Sasthrabhavan, Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram-695 004.Phone:0471-2548 316,
Website : www.kscste.kerala.gov.in

JUNIOR SCIENTIST (SCIENTIST B)
- only for Ezhava / Thiyya / Billava

The KSCSTE invites application for the post of Junior Scientist (Scientist B). The application should be submitted through online only.

For details log on to www.kscste.kerala.gov.in
Last date for the receipt of application is 23.04.2023, 5.00pm.

(RO/00803/D3/2023/I&PRD) **MEMBER SECRETARY**

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PWD ZONE KOTA
No.4380 **Dated 17.3.23**

NIT No.23/2022-23
Notice Inviting Bid
NIB No. PWD2223A4759

Bids for Budget Announcement Road and Bridge works year 2022-23 in PWD Zone Kota are invited from interested bidders upto 6.00 pm, 26.04.2023. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in) of the Rajasthan and http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in website. The approximate value of the procurement is Rs. 7240.18 Lacs.
UBN No. PWD2023WLOB18855

(N.S. Meena)
Addl. Chief Engineer
DIPR/C/4645 **PWD Zone Kota**

Office of the Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Dn. Sri Ganganagar (Raj.)
No. EEG/NIT/2022-23/5096 Dated : 22.03.2023

Notice Inviting Bid No. 34 Year 2022-23
(NIB Code : PWD2223A4880)

Bid for **"सड़क एवं भवन निर्माण तथा मरम्मत कार्य"** are invited from interested bidders from dated 27.03.2023 to 17.04.2023 up to 6.00 PM and will be opened on 18.04.2023 at 4.00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in) of the state and departmental website. The approximate value of the procurement is **Rs 250.01 lac & No. of Works are 04.**
UBN No. : PWD2223WSOB19483, PWD2223WSOB19484
PWD2223WSOB19485, PWD2223WSOB19486

Executive Engineer
DIPR/C/4801/23 **P.W.D. Dn. Sri Ganganagar**

INBRIEF

Date for mandatory fitness testing for vehicles extended

The government has extended the date of mandatory fitness testing through a registered Automated Testing Station (ATS) for heavy goods and passenger motor vehicles by 18 months to October 1, 2024. Earlier, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) had said that fitness testing for heavy goods vehicles and heavy passenger motor vehicles through an ATS will be mandatory from April 1, 2023. However, for medium goods vehicles, medium passenger motor vehicles and light motor vehicles (transport), the MoRTH said the requirement will be made compulsory from June 1, 2024. PTI

NIA seizes cash, car in Haryana arms recovery case

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has seized over ₹7.80 lakh in cash and a vehicle as "proceeds of terrorism" in a case related to the recovery of arms and explosives, smuggled from Pakistan by the proscribed Babbar Khalsa International, in Haryana last year, an official said on Friday. The cash and the Innova vehicle were seized on Thursday under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), a spokesperson of the NIA said. On May 5 last year, police had intercepted the vehicle at the Bastara Toll Plaza in Haryana and recovered three IEDs, a pistol with two magazines, 31 rounds of ammunition, and ₹1.30 lakh in cash. PTI

LS Speaker Om Birla receives delegation from Israel

Stating that terrorism is a threat to both India and Israel, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday urged for a common strategy and deeper cooperation between the two countries to combat the menace of terrorism. Mr. Birla made these remarks while welcoming an Israeli parliamentary delegation to India led by Amir Ohana, Speaker of the Knesset (Parliament) of Israel. The delegation is in India at the joint invitation of Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar and the Lok Sabha Speaker. The visit, which began on Friday, will continue till April 4.

Court denies bail to Manish Sisodia in Delhi excise case

The Rouse Avenue court in New Delhi on Friday denied bail to Delhi's former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in the corruption case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in relation to now-scrapped Delhi excise policy. The court maintained that the CBI not only shows Mr. Sisodia's active participation in the criminal conspiracy, but also the *prima facie* commission of some substantive offences under the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act by him. Mr. Sisodia's bail was denied by special judge M.K. Nagpal, who said the applicant cannot be released on bail at this stage of investigation as his release may adversely affect the investigation and hamper the progress thereof.

SC to examine Kerala CJM court's verdict on dacoity

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has agreed to examine how a Chief Judicial Magistrate court in the State of Kerala "exceeded its jurisdiction" to try and convict a man for dacoity.

The offence of dacoity under Section 394 of the Indian Penal Code is punished with life imprisonment or sentence up to 10 years and fine.

Under Section 29 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) "may pass any sentence authorised by law except a sentence of death or of imprisonment for life or of imprisonment for a term exceeding seven years".

A Bench led by Justice Krishna Murari has issued notice to the State of Kerala on the appeal filed by the accused-petitioner Ratheesh, represented by advocates Tomy Chacko and Ankolekar Gurudatta.

The Bench listed the case for detailed hearing in July.

The court granted Mr. Ratheesh exemption from surrendering until further orders.

Highest proportional increase of COVID cases in India: WHO

XBB.1.16, the new Omicron variant, is responsible for the spike, says the global health body in its report for the period from February 27 to March 26; no rise in hospitalisations or deaths noted

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The highest proportional increase of new COVID-19 cases was observed in India, in the South-East Asia Region, according to the World Health Organization's (WHO) latest data for February 27 to March 26, 2023.

Globally, however, nearly 3.6 million new cases and over 25,000 deaths were reported in the same period, a decrease of 27% and 39%, respectively, compared to the previous 28 days.

"Despite this overall downward trend, it is important to note that several countries have recently reported significant increase in cases. As of March 26, over 761 million confirmed cases and over 6.8 million deaths have been reported globally," the WHO stated.

In the South-East Asia region, India (18,130 new cases; 1.3 new cases per 1,00,000; +437%) is followed by Indonesia (8,405 new cases; 3.1 new cases per 1,00,000; +39%), and Thailand (597 new cases, as per the data).

The WHO said the South-East Asia Region reported over 27,000 new cases, a 152% increase as compared to previous 28-day period. PTI

The WHO noted that the South-East Asia Region reported over 27,000 new cases, a 152% increase as compared to the previous 28-day period.

Seven (64%) of the 11 countries in the region, for which data are available, reported an increase in new cases of 20% or greater, the WHO said.

It added that currently, it is closely tracking one variant of interest (VOI) – XBB.1.5 – and six variants under monitoring (VUMs). The VUMs are BQ.1, BA.2.75, CH.1.1, XBB, XBF and XBB.1.16.

XBB.1.16 was added to this list on March 22.

New variant

XBB.1.16, the new Omicron variant, is responsible for the spike in India. As per the WHO, this variant is a recombinant of BA.2.10.1 and BA.2.75, and has three additional mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein (E180V, F486P and K478R) compared to its parent lineage XBB.

"The F486P mutation is shared with XBB.1.5. Mutations at position 478 of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein have been associated with decreased antibody neutralisation, increased transmissibility, and pathogenicity," it said.

The WHO added that as of March 27, 712 XBB.1.16 sequences have been reported from 21 countries. However, so far, reports do not indicate a rise in hospitalisations, ICU admissions, or deaths due to XBB.1.16.

Globally, XBB.1.5 accounts for 45.1% of cases in epidemiological week 10 (March 6 to March 12, 2023) compared to 35.6% in week 6 (February 6 to February 12, 2023).

However, the WHO cautioned that the current trends describing the circulation of variants should be interpreted with due consideration of the limitations of the COVID-19 surveillance systems.

"These include differences in sequencing capacity and sampling strategies between countries, changes in sampling strategies over time, and delays in uploading sequence data," it said.

Ram Navami clash: over 300 booked in Mumbai

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI/KOLKATA

The Mumbai Police, on Friday, registered a case against nearly 300 persons and so far, over two dozen people have been arrested in connection with a clash between two groups during a Ram Navami procession at Malvani, in suburban Malad (West) on March 30.

The police are likely to arrest more persons as they are trying to identify those involved in the clash with the help of the available video footage of the area.

According to the police, the incident took place when the procession was going on and some people objected to the loud music.

State Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha said that the procession was taken out after permission from the police, and such an incident was unfortunate.

Prohibitory orders were imposed in southern parts of Howrah town on Friday after violence erupted over Ram Navami celebrations. As many as 36 persons were taken in custody in connection with the violence.

Toll in stepwell roof collapse rises to 36; police file FIR against two temple trustees

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

The death toll in the Indore temple stepwell roof collapse incident rose to 36 on Friday. The police have filed a first information report (FIR) against two temple trustees even as residents accused the Indore Municipal Corporation of failing to check illegal encroachment by the temple management.

Devotees were standing on a platform on top of the ancient *bawdi* or stepwell at the Beleshwar Mahadev Jhulelal temple, when it collapsed on Thursday during a *havan* ritual.

Rescue operations continued till Friday afternoon when the 36th body was fished out.

According to Neeraj Medha, the Juni Indore police station's officer-in-charge, the FIR was registered against Sevaram Galani, president of the Beleshwar Mahadev Jhulelal Temple Trust, and its secretary Murli Kumar Sabnani, under Indian Penal Code Section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder).

Site of tragedy: A police officer takes pictures during a rescue and recovery operation in Indore on Friday. REUTERS

A magisterial probe has also been ordered and further police action will depend on the findings of the probe, Indore Police Commissioner Makrand Deuskar said.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday morning visited the private hospital where 16 people were admitted, before heading to the site of the tragedy.

Mr. Chouhan told pressmen that he had directed the administration to find out if there were any more such wells or borewells over which any construction has been carried out, covering them in a similarly dangerous way.

Police file FIR 50 days after death of IIT-B Dalit student

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

Nearly 50 days after the death by suicide of 18-year-old Darshan Solanki, a first-year Dalit student at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, the Mumbai police have registered a first information report (FIR) for abetment to suicide against an unknown person.

The police also invoked relevant Sections of the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Now, days after the investigators said they had found a note purportedly written by Solanki, blaming his classmate, the Powai police station has registered a case in the matter based on the complaint lodged by the victim's father Rameshbhai Solanki on March 16. The student's kin have been holding protests demanding an investigation into the death.

Australia looks to India for wide market for lithium export

Jacob Koshy
CANBERRA

The country is the world's biggest exporter of the metal, with most of it going to China

Australia would rather have a diversified market for its lithium exports – and this includes India – than they all be cornered by the U.S., Don Farrell, Australia's Minister for Trade and Tourism said in a media interaction. Lithium is a critical metal necessary to make batteries for electric vehicles.

Mr. Farrell was speaking in the context of the U.S.' Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), passed in August 2022, that grants subsidies to electric vehicles produced in the U.S.

The European Union and South Korea have vehemently criticised the IRA on the grounds that it made electric vehicles imported into the U.S. from their regions uncompetitive.

Australia is the world's biggest exporter of lithium with most of it going to China, which dominates the lithium-ion battery production market.

Mr. Farrell said just as the U.S. and Europe were looking to Australia (for minerals) because the only other source was China, Australia was looking to diversify away from a single market and this opened opportunities for India.

"We give you the opportunity of investing in our country. India is building an electric vehicles industry and Australia would like to be part of it," he said.

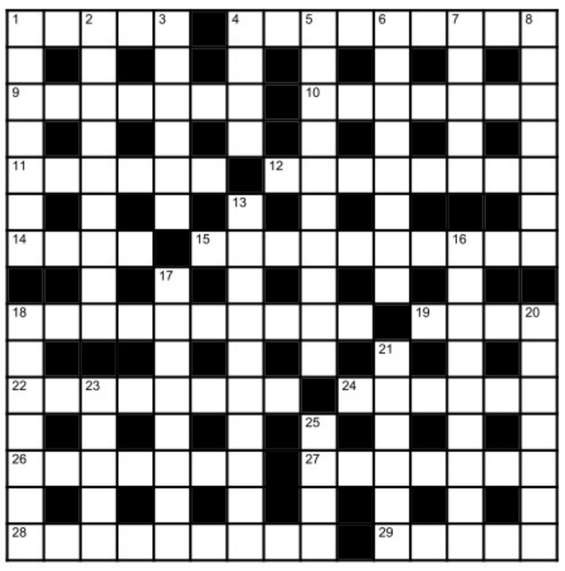
(The writer is in Australia, courtesy the country's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

TH CROSSWORD + 13828

(set by Gussalufz)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Catch reptile with hollowed reed (5)
4 Lacking openings after restructuring, reduce engaging new potential interns for starters (9)
9 Smooth surfaces, since I'm setting (7)
10 Once again, let's deliver (7)
11 Genuine query, say, about cancelling unknowns (6)
12 One beginning action sequence in The Matrix getting discussed? (8)
14 Cut diamonds with diamonds (4)
15 Moving creative work — for the most part, critic taken into tears (7,3)
18 He's four, maybe summer ban's out of order? (4,6)
19 Select tie (4)
22 Old content in document, save again in a different format (2-6)
24 Warm pita sandwiches junction (6)
26 Periodically check if rates go back, or one can't fly (7)
27 The app disconnected after I entered "goodbye" (7)
28 Stories from weed-laden inspiration? Flops, according to Spooner (4,5)
29 Put up with jack instead of king or bail out? (5)

Down

1 Starts to buy ersatz merchandise, second-hand, at a loss (7)
2 Blue ocean, sun... captivating... ultimately halcyon states (9)
3 Drop weapons, mister, as I'd ordered! (6)
4 One's heartlessly dark (4)
5 Endured a cut (10)
6 Suckers taken in by artful lies... (8)
7 Ridiculous whine covering the whole range (5)
8 Went up east and south, finally got extremely rich (7)
13 Officer's chair mars hallway to some extent (3,7)
16 Opera-playing channel that can move you (9)
17 Tip from hospital department about nutrition: avoid shrimp, potato, fungi, basically (3,5)
18 Draw a boundary, a fork somehow separating the two genders (4,3)
20 Be careful with cat in heat (5,2)
21 Dead donkey's tail in food freezer (3,3)
23 Sex toy, unwrapped and left to admire (5)
25 Is H. G. Wells frequently recalled for ability to last? (4)

SUDOKU

	7							1
	5			3		6		
3		2	6				7	
6				5	4	7		
5		7				9		6
		8	7	6				4
	6				2	3		7
		5		1			4	
2							6	

No.SS5755 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	4	3	5	8	7	2	9	6
6	5	9	3	4	2	8	1	7
2	8	7	1	9	6	4	3	5
4	9	5	2	7	1	6	8	3
7	6	2	8	3	5	1	4	9
3	1	8	4	6	9	7	5	2
8	7	6	9	5	4	3	2	1
9	2	4	6	1	3	5	7	8
5	3	1	7	2	8	9	6	4

FAITH

Hurdles we must cross

In life, we must surmount hurdles to reach a goal. And we must aspire for lofty things in life, and not be swayed by the attractions of wealth, popularity or fame. But while we may have laudable ideals, it is not easy to keep to the right path. We invariably come across hurdles, said Malayaman in a discourse. The trick to get ahead is to first identify the hurdles and then take steps to cross them.

Saint Vallalar said a rock may be a stepping stone that leads to a higher level. But it could also be an obstacle, so that instead of climbing higher, we actually end up getting stuck where we are. Or worse, we could fall down further. Thiruvalluvar says that if a man does good every day, then those acts of goodness and charity become stones that block future births. Vallalar identified the stones that block our path. He wanted to seek the feet of God. He prayed for the company of those who were single-minded in their desire to worship at God's feet. This was what people had to do – keep the company of virtuous people.

But there were also things we should not do, said Vallalar. He said a person should avoid the company of those who spoke sweet words to him, but who spoke ill of him behind his back. So, the company of good people will be a stepping stone in life, while the company of vile people will be a hurdle in life. The practice of speaking behind a person's back is a quality to be despised. Thiruvalluvar says that instead of resorting to such behaviour, it would be better if a person died. Then he might get the eternal joy spoken of in didactic literature. Thiruvalluvar says those words which do not hurt anyone or cause harm to anyone are what constitute truth.

TALLINN

Russia might put strategic nuclear weapons in Belarus, says leader

AFP

Russian strategic nuclear weapons might be deployed in Belarus along with part of Russia's tactical nuclear arsenal, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said on Friday. The strategic nuclear weapons such as missile-borne warheads would pose an even greater threat, if Moscow moves them to its ally's territory. AP

DAMASCUS

Israel conducts air strike in Syria, details about casualties unclear

AFP

Israel carried out an air strike near the Syrian capital early Friday, Syrian state media reported, the second attack near Damascus in the last two days. Citing a military source, the state media reported that Israel fired "sprays of missiles" just after midnight. There were no details about casualties. REUTERS

KARACHI

At least 11 killed in Pakistan Ramzan donation stampede

AFP

At least 11 people were killed in a crowd crush in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi on Friday as a Ramzan alms donation sparked a stampede of over 600 people in the inflation-hit nation, police said. The stampede happened when women with children flocked to a factory distributing alms, a police officer said. AFP

ISLAMABAD

Members of Hindu community in Pakistan slam forced conversions

FILE PHOTO

Several members of Pakistan's minority Hindu community held a protest march in Islamabad to draw attention to the menace of forced conversions of Hindu girls. "Girls, some as young as 12 and 13 are abducted in broad daylight, forced to convert to Islam and then married off to older Muslim men," protestors said. PTI

U.K. to join trans-Pacific partnership trade treaty

We are at our heart an open and free trading nation, and this deal to join CPTPP demonstrates the real economic benefits of our post-Brexit freedoms, says British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Rishi Sunak speaking at the House of Commons, in London. AFP

The U.K. on Friday acceded to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak describing the outcome as an example of "post-Brexit freedoms". The agreement will now need to be ratified by Westminster and each of the CPTPP countries.

"We are at our heart an open and free trading nation, and this deal demonstrates the real economic benefits of our post-Brexit freedoms," Mr. Sunak said about the U.K.'s move to join the 11-member Asia-Pacific trading bloc, which, without the U.K., accounts for some 13% of global GDP . Talks had been on-going for 21 months.

The British government said the deal would mean that more than 99% of British exports – including for key markets such as cheese, cars, chocolate, machinery, gin and whisky – would have zero tariffs. It also claimed that the deal would add £1.8 billion ($2.2 billion) annually to the U.K. economy in the long run. This, however, translates to a modest boost of 0.08% to GDP .

The government said the deal was a "gateway" to the Indo-Pacific region which would account for a majority (54%) of global economic growth in the future. The U.K. is currently also negotiating a "free trade" deal with India. It will also, as a CPTPP member, get a veto on whether China joins the treaty. Beijing had applied to become a member of the bloc in September 2021. The U.S., in the Donald Trump presidency, had withdrawn from the CPTPP's precursor, the TPP.

Downing Street highlighted some of the benefits of the CPTPP – such as a cut in whisky and car tariffs for British goods going to Malaysia. Services – which are a key U.K. export – accounted for 43% of exports to CPTPP countries last year, Downing Street said. Once Britain becomes a member of the bloc, U.K. firms will not need to establish a local office or be resident to provide services and will be able to operate on a par with firms in host countries, the government said.

Questioned by Times Radio on whether the impact of joining CPTPP would make up for the economic loss of leaving the EU, the U.K.'s international trade secretary Kemi Badenoch, suggested it was time to move the debate on from Brexit.

"We've left the EU so we need to look at what to do in order to grow that U.K.. economy and not keep talking about a vote from seven years ago, " she said.

Republicans rally to Donald Trump's defence, denounce his indictment

Agence France-Presse
WASHHINGTON

Donald Trump

Top Republican allies and rivals of former U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday denounced his indictment as a politically motivated attempt to derail his 2024 White House bid.

Kevin McCarthy, the top Republican in the House of Representatives and second in line to the presidency, and others lashed out at Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat, who pushed the criminal inquiry against Mr. Trump.

"Bragg has irreparably damaged our country in an attempt to interfere in our Presidential election," Mr. McCarthy said. "He weaponised our sacred system of justice against President Donald Trump. The American people will not tolerate this injustice, and the House of Representatives will hold Alvin Bragg and his unprecedented abuse of power to account," Mr. McCarthy said. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, seen as Mr. Trump's main potential rival for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, called the indictment "un-American".

"The weaponisation of the legal system to advance a political agenda turns the rule of law on its head," Mr. DeSantis said. "It is un-American." He accused Mr. Bragg of "stretching the law to target a political opponent".

Hush money

A New York grand jury indicted Mr. Trump on Thursday over hush money payments made to porn star Stormy Daniels, making him the first ever serving or former President to face criminal charges.

Donald Trump Jr, the 76-year-old president's eldest son, called the indictment "weaponised justice at its absolute worst". "This is third world prosecutorial misconduct," said Eric Trump, another of his sons. "It is the opportunistic targeting of a political opponent in a campaign year." Representative Elise Stefanik, the third-ranking Republican in the House, denounced the indictment as "unprecedented election interference" and a "political witch-hunt". "The radical Far Left will stop at nothing to persecute Joe Biden's chief political opponent ahead of the 2024 presidential election to suppress the will and voice of the American people," Ms. Stefanik said.

President Joe Biden declined on Friday to comment on the indictment. Mr. Biden, who was traveling to Mississippi for the day, deliberately did not answer several questions on the subject from journalists gathered to witness his departure from the White House.

U.S. affirms ties with Israel; warns not to trigger tensions

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday pledged enduring ties with Israel but warned against inflaming tensions with the Palestinians, following a rare public spat between the allies.

President Joe Biden on Tuesday called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to step back from a bid to weaken the judiciary that has set off massive protests.

Mr. Netanyahu, who at least temporarily froze the push faced with a general strike, responded that he would not bow to foreign pressure but took a more conciliatory tone when he participated in a democracy summit called by Mr. Biden.

Blinken 'reaffirmed the importance of the enduring U.S.-Israel bilateral relationship'

In the highest level contact since the exchange, Mr. Blinken called Foreign Minister Eli Cohen and "reaffirmed the importance of the enduring U.S.-Israel bilateral relationship," State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel said. Mr. Blinken also discussed Iran, seen by Mr. Netanyahu as a paramount threat, and renewed U.S. support for a Palestinian state – an idea rejected by much of Mr. Netanyahu's hard-right government.

The top U.S. diplomat "emphasised the importance of refraining from unilateral actions that exacerbate tensions," Mr. Patel said.

"We will continuously work to strengthen the dialogue with this great ally", Mr. Cohen added.

NATO chief says Finland to become member

Agence France-Presse
BRUSSELS

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said on Friday that Finland would formally become a member within days, as he congratulated its President on clearing the final hurdle to joining.

"I look forward to raising Finland's flag at NATO HQ in the coming days. Together we are stronger," Mr. Stoltenberg tweeted.

It is expected the membership could be formalised in the NATO meet in Brussels next week.

Zelensky vows to defeat 'Russian evil'

Agence France-Presse
BUCHA

President Volodymyr Zelensky vowed to defeat Russia on Friday speaking alongside European leaders in Bucha one year after Moscow's troops withdrew from the Ukrainian town synonymous with war crimes allegations.

"The battle for the foundation of the free world is taking place on Ukrainian land. We will definitely win. Russian evil will fall, right here in Ukraine," Mr. Zelensky said.

He earlier called Bucha "a symbol of the atrocities" committed by Russia's forces, who have been linked to the extra-judicial killings of unarmed civilians in Bucha.

"We will never forgive. We will punish every perpetrator," Mr. Zelensky said in a statement on social media.

Ukraine and its Western allies have accused Russian troops of war crimes after the discoveries, pointing to an abundance of footage and witness accounts. Moscow denies the accusations, claiming the atrocities in Bucha were staged.

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TENDER ALERT

1)E-Tender Call Notice No.CPC-59/2022-23: Bids are invited under single stage two part bidding system with e-RA from reputed EPC/ Turnkey Contractors for Engineering, Supply, Erection, Testing and commissioning of 2x160MVA & 2x40MVA, 220/132/33kV GSS at Chhendipada along with 220kV D/C line from existing 220/33kV GSS Rengali (Line length-38.5KM approx.) and 132kV D/C line from Existing 132/33 kV GSS, Boinda (Line length-42KM approx.) With 2 numbers 220kV bay extension at Rengali and 2 numbers 132kV bay extension at Boinda in Odisha state at an estimated cost of Rs.149.35Core. Complete set of bidding documents are available on:**www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL** portal and OPTCL's official website: **www.optcl.co.in**.

HIPR-72/2022-23
CAD-5335 OIPR-04011/11/0200/2223

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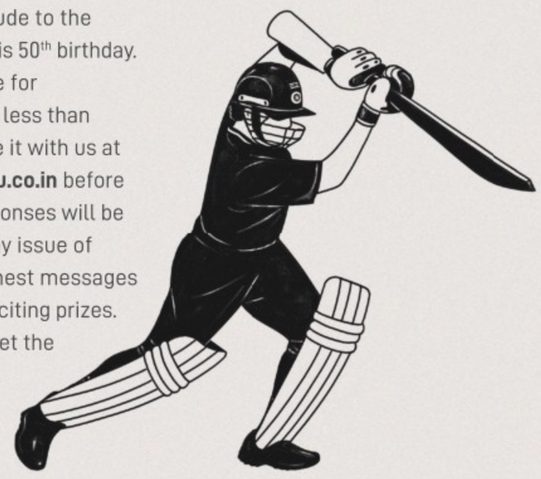

#50forSachin

SPORTSTAR

INBRIEF

'Ola Electric sold more than 27,000 scooters in March'

Ola Electric on Friday said it sold more than 27,000 units of EV scooters in March this year, the highest in seven consecutive months. During FY23, the company sold more than 2 lakh scooters, consolidating a market share of more than 30% in the EV two wheeler space. "While last year has been successful in making EV's mainstream, the next couple of years will take the EV revolution to humanity scale," said founder and CEO Bhavish Aggarwal.

Two U.S. PE funds sell ₹134-cr. stake in Shriram Properties, exit

Two U.S.-based real estate private equity (PE) firms Walton Street Capital and Starwood Capital have exited Shriram Properties Ltd. (SPL) by selling 14.27% stake through a bulk deal on the NSE for ₹134 crore. "We see the current deal as a very good outcome for long term value creation, and welcome our new investors, given the current market situation," CMD M. Murali said. SPL ended the day at ₹60.34 on the BSE, gaining more than 9% over Wednesday's closing price.

DIPAM meets revised targets for 2022-23 receipts

The Centre on Friday received as much as ₹1,632 crore in dividends from five public-sector companies, taking its total disinvestment and dividend receipts tally for 2022-23 to over ₹94,280 crore. "With dividend receipts adding up to ₹58,988.34 crore and disinvestment transaction yielding ₹35,293.52 crore, we have now surpassed the 2022-23 Revised Estimates of ₹93,000 crore for receipts from these two heads," an official from DIPAM told *The Hindu*.

Core output rose 6% in Feb.

Production, however, fell 7.8% sequentially from January's level, with growth for the first month of 2023 revised upwards to 8.9%; fertiliser production led the expansion in output with a 22.2% surge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Output across India's eight core sectors rose at a three-month-low pace of 6% in February, as growth eased from January's revised estimate of 8.9%, which was the highest uptick in seven months.

Fertiliser production continued to lead growth with a 22.2% surge, while coal, steel and electricity production eased from double-digit growth in January to rise by a 7% - 8.5% range during February. Cement production grew 7.3%, compared with January's 4.6% expansion.

Core slows

Combined output growth for the eight sectors that account for 40% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) slowed to a three-month low

- All eight sectors saw production contract month-on-month from January 2023
- Coal, steel and electricity output growth eased from January's double-digit pace to a 7%-8.5% range
- Cement output grew 7.3%, compared with January's 4.6% expansion

Crude oil output shrank 4.9%, the ninth successive contraction and the sharpest drop in as many months. Natural Gas and refinery products' growth moderated from about 5% in January to just over 3%.

The overall Index of Core Industries, which constitutes about 40% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), dropped 7.8% sequentially in February, with all eight sectors recording lower numbers.

IIP, which clocked a 5.2% uptick in January, is likely to see growth ease to about 4.5% in February, according to Bank of Baroda chief economist Madan Sabnavis. The sharp growth in fertiliser output, he reasoned, was partly driven by firms rebuilding inventories, and bolstered further by a low base effect in the year-earlier period when the segment had logged negative growth.

Core sectors' growth would likely moderate further in March due to unseasonal rainfall that would have dampened coal and electricity output, cautioned ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar.

CAD narrows to 2.2% of GDP in third quarter of FY23: RBI

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Private transfer receipts amounted to $30.8 billion, an increase of 31.7% from the year earlier

India's current account deficit (CAD) narrowed to $18.2 billion (2.2% of GDP) in Q3 of FY23 from $30.9 billion (3.7% of GDP) in Q2 of FY23 and $22.2 billion (2.7%) in the year-earlier period, according to RBI Balance of Payments data.

"Underlying the lower current account deficit in Q3 2022-23 was a narrowing of merchandise trade deficit to $72.7 billion from $78.3 billion in Q2 2022-23, coupled with robust services and private transfer receipts," the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday.

Services exports reported a growth of 24.5% year-on-year on the back of rising exports of software, business and travel services. Net services receipts increased both sequentially and year-on-year.

Net outgo from the primary income account, mainly reflecting investment income payments, increased to $12.7 billion from $11.5 billion a year earlier.

Private transfer receipts, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, amounted to $30.8 billion, an increase of 31.7% from the year earlier.

Net FDI declines

In the financial account, net FDI decreased to $2.1 billion from $4.6 billion a year earlier, the RBI said.

Net foreign portfolio investment recorded inflows of $4.6 billion, as against an outflow of $5.8 billion in Q3 of 2021-22.

'Fiscal deficit touched 82.8% of full-year target in Feb.'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre's fiscal deficit touched 82.8% of the full-year target at the end of February, according to data from the Controller General of Accounts on Friday.

In actual terms, the fiscal deficit or gap between the expenditure and revenue collection during April-February period stood at ₹14.53 lakh crore.

Fiscal deficit in the comparable period of 2021-22 was 82.7% of that year's revised estimate in Budget.

Govt. raises rates on most small saving schemes, except PPF

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The Centre has raised interest rates on most small savings schemes for the April to June quarter, barring the Public Provident Fund (PPF) whose returns have been static at 7.1% for the last three years.

Returns on the Sukanya Samriddhi Account were, however, increased for the first time since April 2020 – to 8% from 7.6%– while the Senior Citizens Savings scheme would now fetch 8.2% instead of 8%.

The Finance Ministry, which notified the new rates, also lifted the rate on National Savings Certificate from 7% to 7.7% and Kisan Vikas Patra from 7.2% to 7.5%. The monthly income scheme will deliver 7.4% (from 7.1%).

The rate of return on 1-, 2- and 3-year time deposits has been raised by 10 basis points (0.10%) for the next quarter, yielding 6.8%, 6.9% and 7%, respectively, while 5-year time deposits will earn 7.5% (7%). The rate paid on 5-year recurring deposits is being raised from 5.8% to 6.2%.

"As expected, small savings interest rates have been hiked by 10-70 basis points," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at ICRA. "This should help garner steady deposits in the coming quarter, in light of the expected rate hike from the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee in April, which would then get transmitted to bank deposit rates."

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	58,992	1.78
US Dollar	82.21	0.15
Gold	59,680	1.60
Brent oil	79.63	–

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	1750.45	10.05
Adani Ports	631.90	-4.75
Apollo Hosp	4310.90	-52.10
Asian Paints	2761.65	-8.85
Axis Bank	858.50	15.90
Bajaj Auto	3884.75	5.45
Bajaj Finserv	1266.50	20.45
Bajaj Finance	5616.75	-8.45
Bharti Airtel	749.00	5.40
BPCL	344.30	4.45
Britannia Ind	4322.15	45.95
Cipla	900.50	12.80
Coal India	213.65	0.70
Divis Lab	2823.35	3.10
Dr Reddys Lab	4622.75	54.95
Eicher Motors	2948.85	15.15
Grasim Ind	1632.70	1.00
HCL Tech	1085.25	17.75
HDFC	2625.50	22.45
HDFC Bank	1609.55	21.75
HDFC Life	499.20	3.25
Hero MotoCorp	2347.35	43.20
Hindalco	405.35	6.30
Hind Unilever	2560.35	29.50
ICICI Bank	877.25	26.25
IndusInd Bank	1067.95	10.85
Infosys	1427.95	44.40
ITC	383.50	0.75
JSW Steel	688.10	9.20
Kotak Bank	1732.85	11.80
L&T	2164.20	16.75
M&M	1158.70	14.40
Maruti Suzuki	8292.15	-3.15
NestleIndia	19704.50	651.55
NTPC	175.10	1.10
ONGC	151.05	1.70
PowerGrid Corp	225.70	3.25
Reliance Ind	2331.05	96.35
SBI Life	1101.10	2.40
State Bank	523.75	7.25
Sun Pharma	983.10	-8.80
TataConsumerProduct	708.85	11.30
Tata Motors	420.80	11.60
Tata Steel	104.50	0.90
TCS	3205.90	67.00
Tech Mahindra	1101.85	20.75
Titan	2514.90	-0.15
UltraTech Cement	7622.15	51.40
UPL	717.65	10.25
Wipro	365.25	6.20

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on March 31

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	81.97	82.29
Euro	89.13	89.49
British Pound	101.41	101.82
Japanese Yen (100)	61.43	61.67
Chinese Yuan	11.92	11.97
Swiss Franc	89.40	89.75
Singapore Dollar	61.61	61.86
Canadian Dollar	60.52	60.76
Malaysian Ringitt	18.57	18.66
Australian Dollar	54.88	55.11

Source:Indian Bank

Listed non-govt. firms saw lower capital formation in FY22

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Corporations were cautious about their capacity expansion and capital investment plans due to uncertainties in demand conditions in the aftermath of the pandemic, elevated input costs, global supply bottlenecks and other factors, and this resulted in lower fixed capital formation during 2021-22, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The RBI data was based on the audited annual accounts of 6,973 non-government, non-financial (NGNF) public limited companies during 2021-22.

During this period, at the aggregate level, public limited NGNF companies preferred short-term borrowings over long-term financing, which improved their leverage; the debt-to-equity ratio moderated to 36.7% during 2021-22 from 41.3% in the previous year.

Operating profits of NGNF public limited companies increased by 29.0% in 2021-22 over and above a rise of 15.6% in the previous year. Interest coverage ratio increased to 4.1% during 2021- 22 (from 3.0% in the previous year) on the back of lower interest expenses and higher gross profits, the RBI said.

FTP moots setting up e-com export hubs

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The government's new Foreign Trade Policy extends all export benefits to e-commerce overseas shipments, which it targets to grow to $200-300 billion annually by 2030, and plans to create hubs for such exports with designated zones for warehousing.

For starters, the value limit for exports undertaken through courier services is being doubled to ₹10 lakh per consignment from ₹5 lakh, and IT systems would be deployed over the next six months by the Departments of Commerce, Post and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).

"We will also formulate a policy for e-commerce export hubs that will be designed to help e-commerce aggregators undertake everything from stocking to customs clearances and processing of returned orders," Director General of Foreign Trade Santosh Kumar Sarangi said. The hubs would also include a processing facility for last mile activities like labelling, testing and repackaging, as per the policy.

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FRONTLINE
LEADING THE DEBATE SINCE 1984

The Amritpal Singh mystery

Who is Amritpal Singh? Frontline got one of the last interviews with the radical preacher and separatist before he went on the run. While the interview throws light on his meteoric rise, writers such as Manjit Singh, Amandeep Sandhu, and Saba Naqvi speak of what makes Punjab vulnerable to the likes of an Amritpal.

Rahul Gandhi vs the BJP. The battle for power between the Congress and the BJP gets uglier with each passing day. Where does this leave the so-called third bloc?

Mallika Sarabhai. The new Chancellor of the famed Kerala Kalamandalam outlines her plans to repurpose, refocus, and repackage the 93-year-old institute.

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Coal India crosses FY23 output target of 700 mt

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Ltd. (CIL) said on Friday it has crossed the annual coal production target of 700 million tonne (mt) in 2022-23.

As of Thursday, March 30, the company produced 700.4 mt of coal, up 13% over 619.8 mt in the year-earlier period, the miner said in a statement.

"CIL has breached its challenging production target of 700 mt one day ahead of FY23 closure. CIL is likely to end FY23 with 703.6 mt output going by the current rate of production," it added.

FTP expands export promotion scheme to include PM MITRA

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

The old export scheme will continue to include apparel sector with self declaration added

The new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) has added the Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks (PM MITRA) scheme as an additional scheme eligible for benefits as Common Service Providers (CSP) under the Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme (EPCG).

Director General of Foreign Trade Santosh Kumar Sarangi said on Friday that between 2015 and 2020, the government introduced a special Advance Authorisation Scheme for export of articles of apparel and clothing accessories. Under the scheme, it allowed duty-free import of input fabric, including inter-lining for shipping articles of apparel and clothing accessories. Under the new FTP, this scheme will continue to cover the apparel and clothing sector in order to facilitate the prompt execution of export orders. Exporters will now also be allowed to self-declare.

Four more towns of export excellence are added to the list of 39 towns. These are Faridabad for apparel, Moradabad for handicrafts, Mirzapur for handmade carpets and dari, and Varanasi for handloom and handicrafts. The aim is to give a thrust to cluster-based economic development. These towns get global recognition and brand credibility; financial assistance for marketing under the Market Access Initiative Scheme; visit to capacity building and technological services; and common service provider facility under EPCG scheme that helps increase competitiveness of entire cluster by enabling common use of capital goods for exports.

Naren Goenka, chairman Apparel Export Promotion Council, said the the special Advance Authorisation Scheme's extension for apparel will enable more exporters to use it.

EASY DECISION

Having an Impact Player a luxury, says Super Kings skipper Dhoni

Chennai Super Kings skipper M.S. Dhoni said, "It's a luxury to have (Impact Player). It becomes slightly easy to take the decision because you can use it at any time," Dhoni said. "The influence of an all-rounder has become slightly less because of the rule," added the four-time IPL-winning captain.

NO HURRY

Want Pant to take his recovery slow and easy, says Warner

Delhi Capitals skipper David Warner on Friday said the team wants regular captain Rishabh Pant to take it "slow and easy" as he recovers from the horrific car accident. "He's looking forward to supporting us as much as he can. I am sure he'll try his best to come and see us. But we want him to take it slow and easy," said Warner.

SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Warner looking forward to captaining Delhi Capitals

David Warner is looking forward to the experience of captaining Delhi Capitals. "We have got a great bunch of men in our team and a great support staff all round," the Australian opener said. "We are looking forward to the game (on Saturday)." Coach Ricky Ponting is delighted the IPL is back in the home-and-away format.

DUGOUT UPDATE

Mumbai Indians names Warrier as replacement for injured Bumrah

Mumbai Indians has signed Tamil Nadu pacer Sandeep Warrier as Jasprit Bumrah's replacement for the Indian Premier League's 2023 edition. Warrier has joined the five-time champion team ahead of its season-opener Royal Challengers Bangalore in Bengaluru on Sunday.

Titans trump Super Kings, begin campaign in style

Gill's sublime innings complements Rashid and Joseph's efforts with the ball; Ruturaj smashes a 50-ball 92 to lay a solid foundation, but the Chennai side fritters away the advantage

IPL-16

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans made a winning start to its title defence, beating Chennai Super Kings by five wickets, in the Indian Premier League opener at the Narendra Modi stadium here on Friday.

Set 179 to win, it appeared that the Titans had let the chase drag on for too long. With 34 needed off four overs, Deepak Chahar and debutant Rajvardhan Hangargekar gave away just 11 runs and the latter even dismissed Vijay Shankar, the home side's last specialist batter.

But Rashid Khan smashed Chahar for a massive six over mid-wicket and edged one over short third-man for four in the penultimate over before Rahul Tewatia finished it off with a six and a four off Tushar Deshpande (IPL's first-ever Impact Player).

Stars of the night: Ruturaj was all grace and timing as he put the Titans attack to the sword while Rashid took the key wickets of Moeen and Stokes. Gill then took over. VIJAY SONEJI

Trademark shots

For Titans, Shubman Gill (63, 36b, 6x4, 3x6) played the anchor. Much of his batting was workmanlike, but it was not without his trademark shots – a short-arm jab for four, a pick-up hit for six and a terrific inside-out maximum off Ravindra Jadeja.

For the second wicket, he put on 53 off 34 balls with Sai Sudharsan, the Impact Player substitute for Kane Williamson, who badly injured his right knee while saving a six. When Gill was dismissed, Titans needed 41 off 30 balls and looked in a spot of bother. But their batting depth carried the day.

After being asked to bat first, CSK rode on Ruturaj Gaikwad's magnificent 92 (50b, 4x4, 9x6).

The 26-year-old's batting stood out for its grace and timing, and was devoid of the frenzied stroke-play that is commonplace in T20s. But for a direct hit Gill missed when he was on 36, it was a chanceless innings.

Ruturaj started with two punched fours off Hardik Pandya in the second over and welcomed Josh Little – the first cricketer from Ireland to play in the IPL – with a six over fine-leg.

Though Rashid was at his stifling best (4-0-26-2), Titans leaked runs from the other end. Ruturaj creamed Hardik for consecutive sixes over long-off and smashed Alzarri Joseph for three maximums in the arc between fine-leg and deep backward square-leg. His half-century came off just 23 balls.

However, CSK's momentum shifted for the worse from the 13th over. From 120 for four in 12.3 overs, M.S. Dhoni's men couldn't manage a single hit to the fence for 21 balls, with Joseph (4-0-33-2) bowling outstandingly well to concede just 11 from two overs.

With Ruturaj's dismissal eight runs short of a century, there was no end-overs flourish. That ultimately cost CSK the match.

Next assignment

CSK: April 3 vs. LSG Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

GT: April 4 vs. DC Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
Devon Conway b Shami 1 *(6b)*, Ruturaj Gaikwad c Gill b Joseph 92 *(50b, 4x4, 9x6)*, Moeen Ali c Saha b Rashid 23 *(17b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Ben Stokes c Saha b Rashid 7 *(6b, 1x4)*, Ambati Rayudu b Little 12 *(12b, 1x6)*, Shivam Dube c Rashid b Shami 19 *(18b, 1x6)*, Ravindra Jadeja c Vijay Shankar b Joseph 1 *(2b)*, M.S. Dhoni (not out) 14 *(7b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Mitchell Santner (not out) 1 *(3b)*; Extras (b-1, lb-6, nb-1): 8; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 178.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-14 (Conway, 2.2 overs), 2-50 (Moeen, 5.5), 3-70 (Stokes, 7.4), 4-121 (Rayudu, 12.5), 5-151 (Ruturaj, 17.1), 6-153 (Jadeja, 17.4), 7-163 (Dube, 18.3).

TITANS BOWLING
Shami 4-0-29-2, Hardik 3-0-28-0, Little 4-0-41-1, Rashid 4-0-26-2, Joseph 4-0-33-2, Dayal 1-0-14-0.

GUJARAT TITANS
Wriddhiman Saha c Dube b Hangargekar 25 *(16b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Shubman Gill c Ruturaj b Deshpande 63 *(36b, 6x4, 3x6)*, B. Sai Sudharsan **(Impact Player in place of Kane Williamson)** c Dhoni b Hangargekar 22 *(17b, 3x4)*, Hardik Pandya b Jadeja 8 *(11b)*, Vijay Shankar c Santner b Hangargekar 27 *(21b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Rahul Tewatia (not out) 15 *(14b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Rashid Khan (not out) 10 *(3b, 1x4, 1x6)*; Extras (lb-6, w-4, nb-2): 12; Total (for five wkts. in 19.2 overs): 182.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-37 (Saha, 3.5), 2-90 (Sudharsan, 9.3), 3-111 (Hardik, 12.1), 4-138 (Gill, 14.6), 5-156 (Vijay Shankar, 17.6)

SUPER KINGS BOWLING
Deepak Chahar 4-0-29-0, Deshpande **(Impact Player in place of Rayudu)** 3.2-0-51-1, Hangargekar 4-0-36-3, Santner 4-0-32-0, Jadeja 4-0-28-1.

Toss: Titans; **PoM:** Rashid.
Gujarat Titans won by five wickets with four balls to spare.

Rebuilt teams PBKS and KKR vie for a winning start

M.R. Praveen Chandran
MOHALI

Punjab Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders carry the same predicament and trepidation and it will be a battle of nerves when the two sides square off in their opening IPL match at the I.S. Bindra Stadium here on Saturday.

With both sides going through an overhaul with new captains, new backroom staff and forced changes due to injuries, the similarities are striking. However, both the teams are keen to start the season on a high. Kings have been the perennial underachievers and their record against Knight Riders is not glittering either.

No-holds barred

Last season, Kings played a high-risk, no-holds-barred attacking batting without desired result.

This season, Kings, under coach Trevor Bayliss, will approach the games pragmatically. "We will try to keep things as simple as possible and will not to complicate it," said Bayliss.

Seasoned pro: Dhawan leads Punjab Kings' training session. R.V. MOORTHY

Nitish Rana has warmed up to his captaincy role. The Delhi batter said Shreyas Iyer's absence was a big blow and the team has regrouped under Chandrakant Pandit. "IPL is like a marathon but the first match sets the trend and we want to win," said Rana.

The teams skipped practice due to inclement weather and with forecast for more rains, it could be a dampener.

Today's matches

Mohali, 3.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 30
PBKS 10 | KKR 20
PREVIOUS MEETING
KKR won by **six wickets**, 2022

Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 2
LSG 2 | DC 0
PREVIOUS MEETING
LSG won by **six runs**, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Issues aplenty for Capitals as they take on Super Giants

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LUCKNOW

How Delhi Capitals will fill the void left by Rishabh Pant's absence has been one of the biggest questions ahead of the 16th season of the IPL. That will be answered – at least partially – on Saturday when Capitals take on Lucknow Super Giants at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Cricket Stadium here.

It could be part-timer Sarfaraz Khan or new recruit Abishek Porel, according to coach Ricky Ponting. Capitals also have to deal with the absence of the South African pace duo of Anrich Nortje and Lungi Ngidi, who are on national duty. Capitals will have to depend on Indian seam options, which include Khaleel Ahmed, Chetan Sakariya, Ishant Sharma and Mukesh Kumar, while for spin there are Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel.

When it comes to batting, in skipper David Warner, Prithvi Shaw, the in-form Mitchell Marsh, Rovman Powell, Rilee Rossouw, Phil Salt and Manish Pandey, Capitals have a problem of plenty.

As for the Lucknow batting, it has to cope with the absence of Quinton de Kock, so there will be more responsibility on the likes of skipper K.L. Rahul, Deepak Hooda, Nicholas Pooran, Kyle Mayers, Marcus Stoinis and Krunal Pandya. For wickets, the host will look to the likes of Mark Wood, Ravi Bishnoi and Avesh Khan.

Gearing up: Super Giants will be keen to begin with a win. PTI

Feeling the energy of the city, says Flower

New entrant: The Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow, makes its debut. PTI

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LUCKNOW

Andy Flower is glad that he could experience the freedom of feeling the spirit of cricket in India for the first time at an IPL.

"This is my first IPL without the restrictions around Covid," the Lucknow Super Giants coach said ahead of his team's first match of the season, against Delhi Capitals. "For us playing on our own ground in front of our own supporters and being in the city and feeling the energy of the city it feels really special."

The former Zimbabwean captain said the team's foreign players, as well as the young Indians, were taken by the excitement and energy of the Lucknow population a few nights ago when they did an open bus tour ride.

Flower welcomes the new rules in the IPL. "I quite enjoy the tweaks to the rules in the game," he said. "One of the great things about our game is the strategic and tactical element to it. And it can be like a game of chess... The teams probably will have two sets of eleven (for batting first and second)."

INBRIEF

Ex-England captain Vaughan cleared of racism charges

Former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan was on Friday cleared of charges that he used racist language when referring to a group of four players of South Asian ethnicity before a match for Yorkshire in 2009. One of the four, Pakistan-born Azeem Rafiq, alleged Vaughan used the term "you lot". A Cricket Discipline Commission report said it was "not satisfied on the balance of probabilities" that Vaughan spoke the words he was alleged to have used.

Young takes New Zealand to ODI series win over Sri Lanka

New Zealand beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in Friday's third ODI in Hamilton, ending the visitors' hopes of direct World Cup qualification. New Zealand won the series 2-0.

The scores: Sri Lanka 157 in 41.3 overs (Pathum Nissanka 57; Matt Henry 3/14) lost to New Zealand 159/4 in 32.5 overs (Will Young 86 n.o., Henry Nicholls 44 n.o.).

SAI to inquire into Bengaluru girls hostel incident

The Sports Authority of India on Friday formed an internal committee to inquire into a disciplinary breach by a student at the SAI Diploma Girls Hostel in Bengaluru. A SAI release stated that on March 28 a trainee at the hostel was allegedly filmed by another student at the common girls' washroom of the institute. "The Committee has been directed to submit its report at the earliest. SAI has also facilitated the alleged victim in helping her lodge a police complaint. Considering the sensitivity of the issue, the matter was reported to the police and on March 29, and the FIR was lodged," the statement read. SAI officials have also suspended the alleged offender and asked her to vacate the hostel after clearance from police.

Rybakina beats Pegula to reach Miami final

Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina reached the Miami Open women's final beating American World No. 3 Jessica Pegula 7-6(3), 6-4 on Thursday.

Other results: Quarterfinals: Women: Petra Kvitova bt Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-4, 3-6, 6-3; **Men:** Carlos Alcaraz bt Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-2; Daniil Medvedev bt Chris Eubanks 6-3 7-5; Karen Khachanov bt Francisco Cerundolo 6-3 6-2.

Ankita Raina battles past Gao Xinyu, enters semifinals

Ankita Raina fought for three hours and eight minutes to beat Gao Xinyu of China 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 in the quarterfinals of the $25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Jakarta on Friday.

The results: $25,000 ITF women, Jakarta, Indonesia: Quarterfinals: Ankita Raina bt Gao Xinyu (Chn) 3-6, 6-3, 7-5. **Doubles (quarterfinals):** Guo Hanyu (Chn) & Hong Yi Cody Wong (Hkg) bt Rutuja Bhosale & Peangtarn Plipuech (Tha) 6-3, 6-4.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 8 a.m.
Formula One: Australian GP (Qualifying), F1 TV Pro & F1 TV App, 10.30 a.m.
BWF: Spain Masters, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 p.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 5, 7.30 & 10 p.m.
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)
Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Sunday)
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 & 10 p.m.

Sindhu makes her first semifinals of the season

She gets the better of Denmark's Blichfeldt in straight games to set up a meeting with Min; Japan's Nishimoto proves too good for Srikanth yet again

Shifting gears: Sindhu had sedate start before turning it on against Blichfeldt. FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

MADRID MASTERS

Press Trust of India
MADRID

Double Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu cruised into the semifinals even as compatriot K. Srikanth crashed out of the Madrid Spain Masters here on Friday. Sindhu got the better of World No. 19 Mia Blichfeldt of Denmark 21-14, 21-17 to reach her first semifinal of the year.

Srikanth, on the other hand, lost to top seed Japanese shuttler Kenta Nishimoto 18-21, 15-21 in the men's singles quarterfinals of the Super 300 event.

Sindhu, who is seeded second, has been struggling to find her feet since returning from a long injury lay off. The 27-year-old has slipped out of the top 10 in the world rankings and until now hadn't been able to cross the second round in the last few tournaments in 2023.

After a sedate start to the match, the former World champion completely dominated the second half of play to take first game comfortably.

Bouncing back

Sindhu, trailing for most part of the second game, made an impressive comeback fighting from 6-12 to register a straight game win. Sindhu will clash with the unseeded Yeo Jia Min of Singapore for a place in the final.

Earlier, fifth-seeded Srikanth, a former World No.1, showed flashes of brilliance but the inconsistency, that has plagued him all season, once proved his downfall. It was Srikanth's third loss to the Japanese shuttler.

The results (quarterfinals):
Women: P.V. Sindhu bt Mia Blichfeldt (Den) 21-14, 21-17.
Men: Kenta Nishimoto (Jpn) bt K. Srikanth 21-18, 21-15.

Wimbledon lifts ban on Russian and Belarusian players

Follow the rule: Russian and Belarusian players must comply with 'appropriate conditions' when competing this year. AFP

Associated Press
LONDON

Russian and Belarusian players will be able to compete at Wimbledon as neutral athletes after the All England Club on Friday reversed its ban from last year. The players must sign declarations of neutrality and comply with "appropriate conditions," including not expressing support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"This was an incredibly difficult decision, not taken lightly or without a great deal of consideration for those who will be impacted," All England Club chairman Ian Hewitt said in a statement.

The players cannot receive funding from the Russian or Belarusian states, including sponsorship from companies operated or controlled by the states.

Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus and Russian players Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev are among the players who can return.

"We also consider alignment between the Grand Slams to be increasingly important in the current tennis environment," the All England Club said.

Coussaud has the last laugh; Aman best Indian performer

THE CHALLENGE GOLF

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

France's Ugo Coussaud (18-under 270) won The Challenge 2023 presented by KGA with a fine five-under 67 final round here on Friday. Coussaud birdied two of the last three holes to collect his maiden win on European Challenge Tour.

Spain's Manuel Elvira finished as joint runner-up alongside Switzerland's Joel Girrbach at 17-under par each.

Aman Raj (15-under 273), who took tied sixth, emerged as the best Indian performer. This is Aman's second straight top-10 finish.

Veer Ahlawat and southpaw Kartik Sharma finished tied-11th.

Memorable: Coussaud claimed his first win on the European Challenge Tour. GETTY IMAGES

Coussaud, tied sixth overnight, won $48,000, while Aman earned just over $10,000.

On his first win on the European Challenge Tour, Coussaud said, "I didn't know when it was coming, but I knew it was coming. After five years on the Challenge Tour, it's not that quick but I'm very happy indeed. It means a lot. My golf has just taken time to come together but now it's good."

The scores (top four):
270: Ugo Coussaud (Fra) (68, 67, 68, 67); **271:** Manuel Elvira (Esp) (70, 67, 68, 66), Joel Girrbach (Sui) (69, 64, 68, 70); **272:** Frederic Lacroix (67, 66, 69, 70), Lars van Meijel (Net) (66, 66, 67, 73).

Alonso fastest; Verstappen third behind Leclerc in practice

AUSTRALIAN GP

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso (1:18.887s) topped the timesheets ahead of Ferrari ace Charles Leclerc in a rain-hit second practice at the Australian Grand Prix on Friday, but Red Bull's World champion Max Verstappen was fastest for the day.

Leclerc, who won in Australia last year, came second nearly half a second adrift. But Verstappen, who came in third, had clocked 1:18.790s which was better than Alonso's second-session best.

Red Bull is attempting to score a third consecutive 1-2 finish for the first time in the team's history in Melbourne after the dominance in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Verstappen's teammate and Jeddah winner Sergio Perez came seventh.

Topping the chart: Alonso was better than Leclerc in the second practice. AFP

Hamilton 13th

Seven-time World champion Lewis Hamilton was a surprise second in the opening practice but could only manage a disappointing 13th in FP2. "This morning was good, but this afternoon wasn't as good," the Briton said.

His teammate George Russell was fourth ahead of Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, with Alpine's Esteban Ocon sixth. McLaren's Lando Norris, Haas driver Nico Hulkenberg and Pierre Gasly in the other Alpine rounded out the top 10.

Williams' Logan Sargeant, who had an electrical problem during the first practice, failed to complete a lap.

The forecast for Sunday's race is dry.

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Prajwal Dev shocks Mukund Sasikumar in quarterfinals

MYSURU: Local lad and unseeded S.D. Prajwal Dev playing his best tennis shocked the fourth seed and Davis Cupper Mukund Sasikumar in three well contested sets 1-6, 7-5, 7-6(4) and entered the semifinals in the men's singles event on the fourth day of the M25 WTT Mysuru Open played at the MTC courts here on Friday.

In a match which lasted for three hours on the centre court, Prajwal came back fighting in the second and third sets to outsmart his experienced rival Mukund, who committed too many unforced errors when it mattered the most, to end on the losing side.

The results:
Men: Quarterfinals: S.D. Prajwal Dev bt Sasikumar Mukund 1-6, 7-5, 7-7(4); Blake Ellis (Aus) bt Vladyslav Orlov (Ukr) 7-6(4), 6-4.

Oliver Crawford (USA) bt Florent Bax (Fra) 6-4, 6-0; George Loffhagen (Gbr) bt Karan Singh 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Doubles: Semifinal: Rithvik Choudary & Nikki Kalliyanda Poonacha bt Parikshit Somani & Manish Sureshkumar 6-3, 6-3.

Overnight suspended match: Quarterfinals: (Overnight 7-6 (7), 1-1) Sasikumar Mukund & Vishnu Vardhan bt Faizal Qamar & Fardeen Quamar 7-6 (7), 3-6, (10-7).

Sabeera Haris shoots 64 in women's trap

Sports Bureau

Sabeera Haris shot 64 to be in the 27th place after three rounds in women's trap, in the shotgun World Cup in Larnaca, Cyprus, on Friday.

Manisha Keer and Shagun Chowdhary shot 63 each and were in the 34th and 35th spots, in a field of 63.

National champion Kiran, shooting in the RPO section, had a score of 64, while Kirti Gupta shot 61.

In the men's section, bronze medallist in the last World Cup, Prithviraj Tondaiman, competing in the RPO section, shot 66, following rounds of 21, 24 and 21.

Creditable draw for Vaishali

FIDE WOMEN'S GP

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

R. Vaishali earned a creditable draw against joint top seed Aleksandra Goryachkina in the sixth round of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess tournament here on Friday.

Vaishali gave nothing away to her rival, rated 143 points higher at 2576. Vaishali forced a draw in 35 moves after perpetual checks.

In the day's only decisive game, Kazakhstan's Bibisara Assaubayeva defeated Polina Shuvalova for her fourth victory.

China's Zhu Jiner also reached four points, by playing a game more than Bibisara, after drawing with Georgia's Nana Dzagnidze.

The results (sixth round): Aleksandra Goryachkina (FIDE, 2.5) drew with R. Vaishali (1); Zhu Jiner (Chn, 4) drew with Nana Dzagnidze (Geo, 2); Polina Shuvalova (FIDE, 2.5) lost to Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 4); Kateryna Lagno (FIDE, 3) drew with Nino Batsiashvili (Geo, 1.5); K. Humpy (2.5) and D. Harika (1.5) bye.

India beats Kyrgyzstan

Sports Bureau

The Indian boys beat Kyrgyzstan 2-0 in the match for the minor placings in the Asia-Oceania World Junior under-14 tennis tournament in Kuching, Malaysia, on Friday. In the match for the 13th place, India will play Uzbekistan.

In the semifinals, Japan beat Korea 2-1 and Pakistan beat Hong Kong by the same margin.

The results (play-off, 13-16th place): India bt Kyrgyzstan 2-0 (Rudra Batham bt Ridvan Loianov 6-2, 6-1; Shivtej Shirfule bt Roman Kim 6-3, 6-1).

Napoli striker Osimhen injured, misses game against AC Milan

Press Trust of India
NAPLES

Serie A scoring leader Victor Osimhen has an injured abductor muscle in his left leg and will miss Sunday's game against AC Milan, Napoli said Friday.

His condition will be evaluated next week," Napoli said. The injury raises questions over whether Osimhen will recover in time for the Champions League quarterfinals – also against Milan – on April 12 and 18.

Osimhen has scored 21 goals in 24 Italian league appearances for Napoli this season, helping the southern club to a massive 19-point lead at the top of the standings.

Giovanni Simeone should replace Osimhen at center forward. The injury comes upon Osimhen's return from national team duty with Nigeria.

Esha and Rhythm gain dual entry for Baku WC

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Esha Singh and Rhythm Sangwan have gained entry in both the air pistol and sports pistol events in the Indian team for the World Cup to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from May 8 to 15.

In the team announced by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) on Friday, T.S. Divya is the other shooter in women's air pistol squad, while it is Manu Bhaker in sports pistol. The NRAI slightly shuffled the team after gauging the performances in the recent World Cup in Bhopal.

The team: Men: Rifle: Rudnrankksh Patil, Hriday Hazarika, Shahu Tushar Mane; Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar, Akhil Sheoran, Swapnil Kusale. **Pistol:** Sarabjot Singh, Varun Tomar, Shiva Narwal; Anish Bhanwala, Vijayveer Sidhu, Ankur Goel. **Women: Rifle:** Ramita Jindal, Tilottama Sen, Nancy; Sift Kaur Samra, Manini Kaushik, Anjum Moudgil. **Pistol:** T.S. Divya, Esha Singh, Rhythm Sangwan; Manu Bhaker.

Till you are sure that sports is a career option, focus on studies: Kohli

He emphasises that a career in sport may not fit all, and one has to be willing to give all their time and absolute attention to it

Clear choice: Virat Kohli shared his journey at the 'Let There Be Sport' conclave, with Sunil Chhetri and Harmanpreet Kaur. K. MURALI KUMAR

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Cricket star Virat Kohli recalled the time when his father asked him to choose between academics and a full time career in cricket. Kohli was clear in his choice for cricket, and is thankful for it.

"I was pretty decent in studies at school, apart from mathematics. I never had trouble at school. I did my work properly. After my 10th standard board exams, I had to miss a lot of classes because I started playing for the India under-19 team and so on.

"My father asked me a simple question whether I wanted to play cricket full time and devote all my energy to it. I said 'Yes'. I was lucky to get that support from him," Kohli said in the 'Let There Be Sport' conclave hosted by Puma.

India women's team captain Harmanpreet Kaur and football icon Sunil Chhetri shared the stage with Kohli.

Kohli added that a career in sport may not fit one and all. "Till the time you are absolutely sure that this (sports) is a career option for you, please focus on studies.

"One has to be honest with themselves and ask if they are willing to give all their time and absolute attention to the sport. And if this fails, one must think of a 'Plan B'. Everyone should have this awareness," Kohli said.

'Hazlewood will miss first few matches'

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood will miss Royal Challengers Bangalore's (RCB) first few IPL matches, RCB Director of Cricket Operations Mike Hesson said here on Friday.

Excerpts from an interaction:

Josh Hazlewood and Glenn Maxwell: Hazlewood will join the group on April 13 and will continue his last bit of rehab in India. We are hopeful that he will be available to play soon after arriving. Maxwell is absolutely fine. He has played all our warm-up games and we expect him to play our opening IPL game.

Impact Player and squads after toss: Now you are pretty much playing 12 against 12, which will take out some of the all-rounders from the game. It limits the opportunities for domestic all-rounders who are trying to find their feet.

RCB playing home games at a stretch: If you are playing in the same conditions you should be pretty good in knowing the

Hesson. ROYALCHALLENGERS.COM

type of players you want in those conditions.

Virat Kohli: Virat is in a very good space and he's playing very nicely. It's not a matter of talking too much tactics. It's all about enjoying the cricket and making sure he's as relaxed as possible.

On the pressure of not having won an IPL title: We are the only team that's made three playoffs in a row. That gives us a good level of confidence that we need at the start. Thinking about the elusive title even before you start playing a tournament is of no benefit for anybody. We have to play good cricket over the next two months to give ourselves a chance.

Performance boosters

Sharing their experience: India coach Rahul Dravid, right, former India mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton and former India hockey international Viren Rasquinha at the Infosys Foundation Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy Sports Conclave in Bengaluru on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

IPL box office ticket sales: chaos, blows and heartburn

Not ideal: Fans were left disappointed with the police adopting a physical approach to control the crowd. K. MURALI KUMAR

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Inefficient management caused suffering for fans who thronged the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Friday to purchase box office tickets for the IPL clash between Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) and Mumbai Indians (MI).

Thousands of fans were packed like sardines in narrow barricaded queues. The ticket counter opened briefly in the morning, before being shut for many hours.

Exhausted fans, many of whom had been in queue since the previous night, pleaded with police personnel for information on why the counter was shut. The police contended that they were not in the know.

Feeble excuses about faulty printers and extended lunch breaks, heard through the grapevine, failed to placate the crowd. This led to heated arguments between the fans and the police. With the hours passing ever so slowly, a section of fans started to beat the stadium gates in frustration. Chants berating RCB rang through the air.

A police officer thought it wise to grab the microphone to shout and threaten those in queue, but this only raised tempers. A little while later, another police officer took a physical approach to control the crowd.

With some slaps and whacks of the 'lathi' – the officer did not spare even innocent onlookers – he attempted to keep everyone in line. The enforcer was particularly tough on those who tried to break queue.

One fan suffered a medical condition, and was lifted out of the queue. He was given questionable first aid by police personnel and made to sit unattended on a plastic chair. There were no ambulances or doctors present.

When the ticket counter finally reopened, the crowd began to push and shove. A few fans, who were crushed screamed, in pain. There were no smiles on the faces of even those who managed to buy tickets; only a huge sigh of relief and a silent prayer for escaping the melee.

There was no separate queue for women, which caused many to complain. It was far too dangerous for them to enter the single queue thronged entirely by men, the women rightly argued.

Many fans questioned the need to have box office sales, when online purchase is an option.

RCB takes on MI here on Sunday.

NEW ARRIVAL

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

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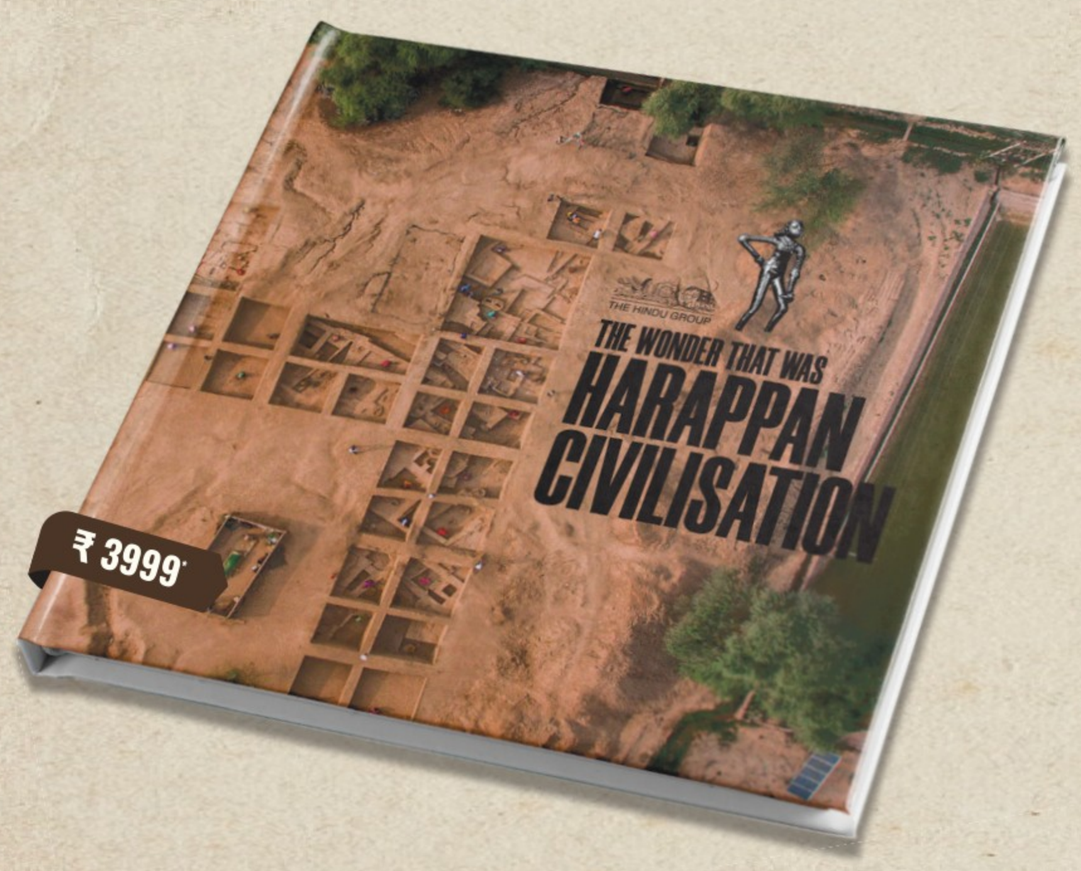

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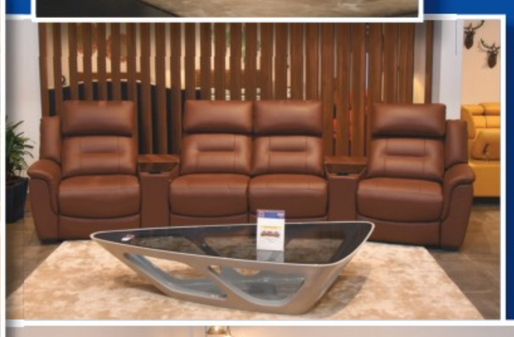

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